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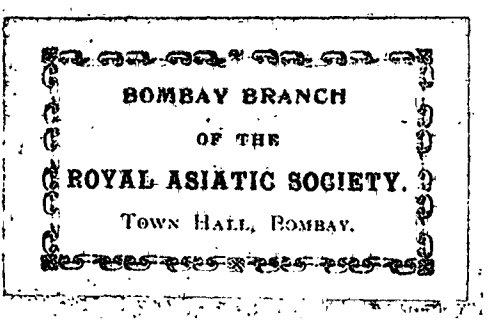

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NATURAL THEOLOGY,

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ERRATA.—VOL. II.

Page 82, line 4, *after* science, *instead of* the full point, *read* ; thus.
102, line 26, *for* he, *read* we.
173, line 9, *for* immensurable, *read* immeasurable.
307, line 16, *read after* production, "in our species."
323, line 15, *for* 4thly, *read* 3dly.

NATURAL THEOLOGY;

OR

ESSAYS

ON THE

EXISTENCE OF DEITY

AND OF PROVIDENCE,

ON THE IMMATERIALITY OF THE SOUL,

AND

A FUTURE STATE.

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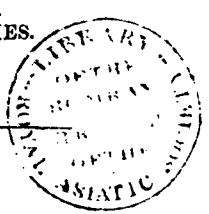
BY THE REV. ALEX. CROMBIE,

LL.D., F.R.S., AND M.R.S.L.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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ESSAY I.

ON THE

EXISTENCE OF DEITY.

CHAPTER II.

SECTION VI.

The intellectual and moral faculties of Man furnish evidence, that he is the production of an Intelligent and Wise Being.

"There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding."—JOB.

"Ex ipsa hominum sollertia esse aliquam mentem, et eam quidem acriorem et divinam, existimare debemus."—CIC. DE NAT. DEOR. Lib. ii.

"Deus, qui prima causa et est, et vocatur, unus omnium, quæque sunt, quæque videntur esse, princeps et origo est; hic superabundanti majestatis fecunditate de se mentem creavit."—MACROB. IN SOM. SCIP. i. 14.

WHATEVER diversity of opinions may obtain respecting the thinking principle in man, it is sufficiently evident, that he is formed for knowledge. By the organization of his frame, he rises superior to every

other animal, and, at the same time, possesses intellectual powers of a much higher order. Though in his individual character his mental acquirements are limited, as a species, he is capable of indefinite improvement. The five senses, with which he is endowed, furnish the elements of his knowledge; to these, therefore, we shall first direct our attention.

When the infant, immediately after birth, opens its eyes on the light of day, the only sensations, of which it is susceptible, are those, which are derived from the inferior senses of smelling, touching, and tasting. And here we may ask in passing, why is this distinction? Why is the exercise of these three sensorial powers immediately bestowed, and that of the two others, incomparably more noble, and afterwards far more useful, withheld? If to grant that, which is immediately necessary, and withhold for a time that, which is not required, be an evidence of wisdom, that evidence is exhibited here. For to an infant the sense of seeing would be of little or no utility; it could not contribute either to its safety, or its sustenance. The sense of hearing

also, one of whose great ends is to apprise the animal of approaching danger, would be of little or no service; for an infant cannot flee from harm, nor is it capable of understanding audible signs. It is the sense of smell, which directs it to its mother's breast. This sense, therefore, is necessary; and it is accordingly given. It is the sense of taste, by which it nauseates and rejects, what is noxious to its health. This also is requisite, and we find it instantly bestowed. It is the sense of touch which enables it to feel and know its mother's breast, and by which it is susceptible of pain. This likewise is necessary, and it is therefore given. The two other senses gradually unfold themselves, and receive impressions from external and more distant objects. We repeat then the question, why are the three senses, which are necessary to the infant at its birth, immediately bestowed, and the two others, which would be of no service to it, delayed, unless by design? Is it the character of chance to consult utility, or of unintelligence to discriminate between things requisite, and things superflous?

Sensation is an affection of the mind, through the medium of a sensorial organ, *occasioned* or *caused* by something external to ourselves. The organic apparatus, by which sensation is produced, is accessible to our examination; but the ultimate effect, or rather the mode of its production, is wholly inexplicable. We know, that it is necessary to vision, that a picture of the object be painted on the *retina* of the eye; and we know, that, by means of the sensorial nerves, the impression made on the exterior organ is communicated to the brain; but how it is, that we thus become conscious of the impression, made by the external object, human sagacity is unable to comprehend. The optic nerves, or the *retina*, are as incapable of consciousness, as the mirror, in which an image is reflected. That the mind is passive in sensation, is obvious, for it is affected by the presence of the object, and it cannot, by a mere act of the will, excite a sensation. Whether it is not also active, has, by some philosophers, been questioned *.

* There are facts which would lead us to believe, that the attention of the mind is necessary to sensation. A

By the organ of vision we are sensible of light and shade; and by that of touch we have directly the sensations of heat and

man labouring under a severe fit of gout has been known to become insensible of the pain, when his mind was otherwise intensely occupied. Objects meet the eye, sounds enter the ear, and there are impressions made on the *tactual* nerves, when we sit or walk, of which we have no consciousness. Hence, we should be disposed to infer, that a mere affection of the organ is not sufficient, and that the attention of the percipient principle is necessary. While some metaphysicians believe, that in such cases the organic impression is not propagated to the mind, others affirm that it is communicated, but is forgotten. If, in the instance adduced, the pain of the gout were really felt, we presume, that the patient could not possibly forget it. Music, it is said, has been known to produce, first, drowsiness, and then sleep, when the sensation is supposed to cease; but as a proof, that there is no such cessation, it is urged, that when the music stops, the person awakes. But would not the sudden change of organic condition produce this effect, where there was no sensation, or mental affection? At the same time, it must be admitted, that the want of recollection, when we awake, furnishes, in itself, no decisive proof; that we did not feel, or even think, during sleep. Whatever may be the force or weakness of the organic impression, it is evident, that there can be no sensation, when the mind is not affected; and we concur with those, who maintain, that to this affection its attention or consent is universally necessary.

cold, pain and pleasure, and indirectly of hardness and softness, figure, magnitude, and motion. By the three other sensorial powers we hear, taste, and smell.

From our senses are derived the majority of our pains and pleasures. Encompassed, as we are, with objects, by which these senses are incessantly affected, and endowed with susceptibilities from external impressions, either pleasurable or painful, it becomes indispensable to our comfort and happiness, that we should be able to distinguish the existing causes. Destitute of this power, we should be left the passive and helpless subjects of surrounding contingencies, incapable of either pursuing good, or avoiding evils. This, however, is not our condition. We are not the creatures of chance, or an ignorant fatality. In the constitution of our minds there is implanted a power, by which we are capacitated to discriminate objects, as sources either of pain, or of pleasure. The power, to which we allude, is perception. In assigning this knowledge to a distinct faculty, we have followed the gene-

ral doctrine of metaphysicians on the subject*. But it matters not either to our argument, or to our conclusion, whether we become acquainted with the causes, or occasions, of our different sensations by a distinct power, or by the general principle of association simply. It is sufficient for our reasoning, that the knowledge is attainable. The mode of acquiring it has been thus illustrated. We are placed, let it be supposed, in a situation, where our sense of smell is affected. As we approach to a certain object, we find, that the sensation becomes stronger, and, as we recede from it, weaker. We conclude, therefore, this object to be the cause of the sensation. We come close to it; it affects our sense of sight in a certain manner, and also, when

* It is true, as Dr. Thomas Brown has observed, that, if we had no other senses, than those of smelling, hearing, and tasting, we should have no notion of external objects; and it is certain, that perception is nothing, but a knowledge of the visual and tactual feelings, which an object, as affecting either of the other two senses, would produce. But, as the feelings are wholly dissimilar to their causes, and as the former may exist without a knowledge of the latter, Dr. Reid's distinction of sensation and perception is at once convenient and justifiable.

we handle it, our sense of touch. Here, then, are associated, with this particular smell, certain visual and tactual feelings; and to the cause of these feelings we affix a name, if no name has been previously assigned to it. The qualities of the object, as thus affecting our senses, we are said to perceive. The feeling or sensation is one thing; the perception of its cause is another: and the knowledge of the associated qualities of the external object, is of indispensable importance to our safety and happiness. Perception, then, may be considered to be that act of the mind, by which it refers certain sensations to certain external objects, as their causes.

It would, however, avail us nothing, to be susceptible of impressions from external objects, and intuitively to perceive their causes, if these impressions vanished immediately with the objects, which produced them, leaving behind them no vestige of their existence. They would then resemble those visions of fancy, which imagination sometimes paints in our sleep, but which are wholly forgotten, when we awake in the morning. The immediate

sensation, during the presence of the object, might occupy our attention, and communicate either pleasure or pain; but these pleasurable feelings could not be repeated at will, nor the painful avoided. Those gratifications, which we now pursue, and by industry attain, would only occur as the results of accident; and those evils which experience and foresight enable us to avoid, would surprise and overwhelm us. Repeated perceptions of the same object would fail to render it familiar to our minds; for no sooner would it be withdrawn, than the perception would vanish with its cause, and the object would be to us, as if it had never been. The parent and the child, the husband and the wife, the brother and the sister, would be respectively strangers, one to the other; and thus the endearing sympathies of relationship, with the other delightful feelings and emotions of our nature, gratitude, friendship, and love, would be entirely excluded. Divested of all those hopes and fears, those desires and aversions, those mutual sensibilities, and those communities of interest, which rouse us to action, and are essential

to enjoyment, our condition would be reduced to the lowest state of animal being.

But the economy of our nature is not left so defective. A power exists in the constitution of our minds for retaining or recalling, in idea, past sensations and perceptions. This power is memory, one of the most important capacities in our mental constitution. I am aware, that the existence of memory, as a distinct faculty, has been denied; and that the power of reminiscence has been resolved by some metaphysicians into a principle of suggestion, or association *. But whether

* Memory is considered by Dr. Thomas Brown to be nothing more, than simple suggestion, or what is commonly denominated association. Nothing is more dangerous, in philosophising, than an excessive love of simplicity. The author, in offering this explanation of the faculty, has, we apprehend, taken only a partial view of the subject. That memory is aided by a principle of association is a fact universally acknowledged; and hence is the utility of the rules delivered for assisting it, by the teachers of what is termed *memoria technica,* or the artificial memory. But that it is not in all, or even the majority of cases, resolvable into a principle of suggestion, seems too evident to admit dispute. The memory of a past occurrence has no necessary dependence on the principle

our capacity to retain ideas or conceptions of past impressions be referable to

to which the author refers it. If we saw an object, yesterday in a certain situation, which attracted our attention, and observed it to-day in a different place, we should remember it, as an object of past perception. We should immediately recognize it, as having been seen before. Here, it is evident, that the principle of suggestion has no influence; the remembrance is instantaneous and immediate; and the instance here supposed bears a strict resemblance, if not to the majority, to a vast number, at least, of the cases, in which this faculty displays itself.

Recollection, or the power of recalling past sensations or perceptions, he resolves into "the desire to remember, and the spontaneous course of suggestion." Here, also, we conceive, that the author, seduced by a love of simplicity, has adopted a theory not consistent with fact. Recollection, we apprehend, is something more, than the mere desire to remember, and the spontaneous course of suggestion. The mere desire of an object will not suffice for its attainment. Exertion may be required; action at least is necessary. We forget, I shall suppose, the name of an acquaintance, and are desirous to recollect it. Though we have forgotten the name, we remember, I shall suppose, that the word is a monosyllable; we remember, also, that it begins with a certain letter of the alphabet. We therefore try a number of monosyllables, beginning with that letter, and after a variety of trials, hit upon the name. That there is here a desire to remember, is true; but the simple desire would never recal the word; and the spontaneous course of thought, which is not subject to our control, might lead us any where astray from the

memory exclusively, or what share conception or imagination may have in this

object. The desire, I say, will not suffice. We must search for what we want to remember, as we would for something lost, or mislaid. There is an act of the will —there is an effort; the suggestions of memory are, on the contrary, spontaneous; and desire is not necessarily accompanied by action.

It is urged, that there is an absurdity in supposing, that we can recover by memory a lost idea; for to will an idea is to know, what we will, and to be conscious of the very idea, which we will to remember *. This, I own, appears to me, a very extraordinary misconception of the fact. I may remember that I had an idea, or a series of ideas, constituting an argument, which has now escaped my memory, and which I am desirous to recal. How does this remembrance imply that I know the idea, or the argument, and that my will to recal it, is to will the knowledge of that, which I already know? The idea is vanished,—the argument is forgotten; but I remember, that they were once mine, and I desire to recover them. This is not to will the possession of that, which I already have, but the recovery of that, which I have lost. Nebuchadnezzar remembered, that he had dreamed, but forgot his dream; when he desired the Chaldeans to bring his vision to his recollection, did he will the knowledge of a dream, which he already knew?

It happens, we believe, to every man occasionally, that he remembers in the morning that he charged his memory on the preceding evening with something to be done in the

* Brown's Lectures. "Academic Questions."

remembrance, or whether memory be no distinct power, but merely the effect of the

course of the day; but what it is, he now forgets. Surely the desire to remember *what the something is*, cannot be considered as a will to remember what he already knows.

It is argued, that, if the circumstances, which enable us to remember the name, or the idea, which we have forgotten, occur to us of themselves, then there is not even indirect volition implied; and if they *do* not spontaneously present themselves, but are separately willed, then there is as direct volition, and, therefore, as much absurdity involved, in calling up the circumstances, as in calling up the object *. Now, it is true, that in the remembrance of the circumstances no volition of them is implied, but a volition to remember the object; it is true, also, that the will has no power in immediately recalling the idea, which the circumstances may suggest; and thus far, which is the main point, that the author wishes to establish, we concur in his doctrine. But it has a power of *setting* the imagination to work in a certain track, which may lead to the recovery of the forgotten idea. That simple suggestion, with a desire to remember, unaccompanied by any effort of the will, or any endeavour to recover the lost idea, or forgotten name, would enable us to regain them, appears to be utterly impossible. The desire to find a book which I have mislaid, if that desire is unaccompanied with search, will not avail to my discovery of it. A forgotten idea may indeed spontaneously, that is, without any effort, present itself, but in such cases the mind is rather passive, than active. In recollection, on the contrary, we are conscious of a

* Brown's Lectures, vol. ii. p. 375.

associating principle, are questions, which nowise affect the validity of our reasoning,

certain energy; we "cast about", in order to recal a departed idea or perception, and by repeated efforts may be successful. The principle of association assists, but it is not simply sufficient. By groping in the dark, we may lay hold of one of the links of a chain, and the others will necessarily follow,—such is the effect of connection or association; but an effort is necessary to find the link. The simple desire is insufficient.

The principle of association constitutes one of the most active, and may be considered as one of the primary properties in the human mind. Into its agency some philosophers have been inclined to resolve all our mental phenomena. That in mind, as in matter, every change must have a cause, is a truth unquestionable; and that we can generally discover the connecting principles, which govern the train of our ideas, is equally true. Yet every person, who devotes much attention to the varying states of his own mind, watching its thoughts, and investigating their causes, must be conscious, that ideas occasionally start up, for which it is impossible to account. I am well aware, how easily the causes may escape our attention. Our ideas, perceptions, and feelings, are frequently of that evanescent nature, and follow one another in such rapid succession, that, unless arrested for a moment, they elude our recollection. But, while this fact is acknowledged, it is at the same time, we believe, a truth, confirmed by every one's experience, who makes what passes within himself the subject of narrow and rigid attention, that thoughts, and names especially, often instantaneously present themselves, to which the train of

or the justness of our conclusion. It suffices to know, that we have the capacity of remembering past events; and that this capacity is essential to our safety as animal, and our improvement and happiness, as moral and intellectual beings. Deprive us of this invaluable power, and we should be wretched; what is past would be lost in oblivion; experience, the great guide of human life, would have no existence; having no knowledge of what has been, we should have no anticipation of what may be. We should exist only in the present moment; our former life would be a blank, and of futurity we could have no conception. Arts would have no place, and science would be unattainable.

If such then is the superlative importance of this faculty to our improvement and happiness, nay, even to our very existence; if without this power the admirable organization of the human frame, its

thought immediately preceding, and perfectly remembered, has no conceivable relation. A cause must exist; but that cause, we apprehend, cannot always be found in the principle of association. This fact is connected with very important consequences.

vital properties, its capacities for action, its accommodation to the circumstances in which it is placed, the provision made in physical nature for its support, its sensorial powers, and its susceptibilities of pleasure, would amount to nothing but a pompous abortion; does not the existence of this faculty, by which all these circumstances are made to harmonize and co-operate for one common end, clearly indicate, that it was designed for that end? And if sensation and perception without memory would be useless, if the former supply the elements of knowledge, and the latter enables us to retain them, have we not reason to believe, that their mutual aptitude and common subserviency to the purposes of human life, are the ordination of a wise and intelligent Cause?

As the means, by which the mind becomes sensible of external and present objects, through the medium of sense, are utterly inexplicable by the sagacity of man, displaying an exercise of wisdom and power, in producing an intellectual effect by physical instrumentality, which excites our astonishment; so, also, the faculty of

memory, by which we review or recal past perceptions, presents a phenomenon equally wonderful. Our existence is confined to the present moment; yet, by this power we transfer it to the past.—We bring the scenes and events of early life, and later years, immediately before us. What occurred in infancy, becomes present to us in old age; what *has once been*, being brought into co-existence with what *is now*. Pains, once felt, are in idea repeated; pleasures, formerly enjoyed, and now gone, are renewed. In short, we make the past exist in the present moment*. To recal to mind occurrences, long lost in oblivion, is a mental operation, so common and so familiar to us, that it awakens no astonishment; but, like every other intellectual phenomenon, it requires only to be contemplated with attention, to excite our admiration. Where does the idea of a past sensation or perception remain, which, for a series of years, has vanished from the mind, as if it had never been? Has it any local existence? Where has it resided? It is not, however, our intention here to en-

* Brown's Lectures.

ter into the philosophy of memory, either in a metaphysical or physiological view, or to attempt an explanation of phenomena, which are probably inexplicable. But we may be pardoned for repeating the observation, that our capacity to travel back through the years, which we have left behind us, and to bring them into combination with the moment now present, is a power so wonderful, that to suppose it to be the production of senseless matter seems a moral absurdity.

This faculty is equally indispensable to numerous tribes of the inferior creation. Pain, or uneasiness, impels the animal to gratify an appetite. Whether we say that he retains in his memory an idea of the object, by which it was formerly satisfied, or that the uneasiness, which he feels, recals the object by association, is a matter of no moment. The image, or idea of that object is necessary; for it is by this, and this only, that he can be enabled to find it. The relief or gratification is, in many species, left to accidental circumstances, but it is effectually secured. And in all animals, that have to provide for their wants by investigation or

search, the necessity of this faculty to the preservation of the individual and the species, is clear and unquestionable. From the end, which it answers, may we not rationally infer, that it was given for that end, and that the animal and the power derive their being from an Intelligent and Provident Cause?

In order to assist and strengthen this faculty, whose supreme importance to our welfare and happiness, we every moment experience, we have in our mental constitution two important auxiliaries, which display their influence at a very early period; we mean, curiosity, and a power of attention. To the former, we are indebted for a large portion of that knowledge, which we acquire in infancy*; and our eagerness to become acquainted with the qualities of any object is naturally accompanied with the exercise of attention, which it never fails to sharpen. Some objects possess in themselves a sufficient degree of interest, and are sufficiently

* The absence of this curiosity in old age, will partly account for the decline of memory, as we approach to the natural extremity of life.

impressive, to seize the whole soul, and to engross its entire regard. These, accordingly, rarely, if ever, escape our remembrance. Others less interesting to our feelings, and less affective of the imagination, are more liable to be forgotten. So useful, however, and so effectual, is the power of attention, in imprinting on our memories even the most unimportant occurrence, that, if we are anxious to remember it, and, with this view, allow our attention to dwell on it until the impression is fixed, the memory very generally retains the perception. The remark, familiar to every one, that we forget this or that circumstance, because we did not attend to it, and remember another equally uninteresting, to which our attention was directed, implies an acknowledgement of the subserviency of this power to the improvement of memory. The early display, then, of that instinctive desire, which we name curiosity, the tendency of this desire to excite and to sharpen attention, and the subserviency of attention to improve the memory, with the necessity of this faculty to our animal and intellectual existence, ex-

hibit such a connection of concurrent means to a beneficial end, as no unintelligent cause is capable of combining, were it even supposed adequate to their individual production.

But we not only remember past sensations and perceptions, but, by a power termed conception, the exercise of which accompanies every remembrance or recollection of a past event, we can, if we desire, detain the remembered object in the eye of the mind, and by thus making it an object of continued thought, impress the idea more permanently on the memory. Hence we are enabled not only to renew, in some degree, but to prolong past pleasures, while painful recollections we can frequently dismiss.

By sensation, it has been observed, we receive impressions from external objects; and these impressions, by the aid of conception and memory, we are enabled to retain or recal. But the mere remembrance of past events would alone be of no avail. To know what has been would profit us nothing, unless it furnished us with some rational ground for anticipating what will

be. The remembrance of the past is of value, chiefly as affording some insight into the future. Something more, therefore, than memory is wanting, to render this faculty of any real utility. And, when we find any quality, property, or power existing, necessary to the production of a certain effect, and perceive, at the same time, that, without some other quality, property, or power, its existence would be comparatively useless, the probability surely would be, if we found them combined, that their concurrence and co-operation were designed, and not accidental*. And this conclusion would be strengthened, if we perceived, that they formed two links of a chain of causes and effects, all necessary to the ultimate result.

The phenomena of nature, as far as we can remember, may have been distin-

* A person, who had never seen a key, might perhaps, though not probably, entertain some doubt, whether it were an accidental, or a designed, production; and he might possibly entertain a similar doubt of a lock: but, if it were shewn to him, how the one fitted the other, each rendering the other useful, he would, without a moment's hesitation, refer them as effects to the agency of ingenuity and design.

guished by general order and uniformity, the same effects proceeding from the same causes. But memory may correctly record any train of past events, and we may be fully assured, that in the same actual circumstances the same effect has uniformly been produced: but on what ground are we to believe, that this regularity will continue to obtain? How do we know, that an object, which has hitherto imparted pleasure, will still be accompanied with a similar sensation; or that one, which has hitherto created pain, may not hereafter communicate a pleasurable feeling? Experience can inform us only of what has been; and reason, in the first years of our existence, cannot come to our aid, even if reason could solve the question, and remove our doubts. There is evidently, therefore, something still wanting, without which memory would be to us of little or no value, and our experience of the past would be profitless, for our direction in future. But our mental constitution is not framed in imperfection; this want is supplied. Against the uncertainty, in respect to what is to come, from which a mere know-

ledge of the past would be unable to relieve us, there exists a provision as salutary, as it is effectual. Man is formed a provident being. There is a principle within him, which gives value to his experience, and renders it conducive to his safety and happiness. By a law of his nature, he instinctively associates one and the same cause with one and the same effect. If memory informs him, that certain antecedents have been uniformly followed by certain consequents, he anticipates, with perfect and invincible confidence, that the same connection will continue to exist. Thus his knowledge of the past is rendered subservient to his guidance in future. Destitute of this natural belief, how wretched would be his condition, involved in endless darkness and perplexity, if he could be supposed even to exist, subject every hour to casualties, dangers, and destruction.

The philosopher may be inclined to resolve this anticipation into the regularity observable in the phenomena of nature, as furnishing a presumption, that the system is under the government of certain fixed

and determinate laws. But the solution offered serves not to explain the fact. If the inference of similar effects from similar causes, were confined to the philosopher, capable as he is of reflecting on the subject, the explanation might be admitted as satisfactory. But the truth is, that the instinctive principle exerts its power, long before either repeated experience can teach, or reason enlighten. As it is a law of our nature, the utility of which indicates the intelligence of its Author, that we believe the reports of memory, without experience of its fidelity, so it is equally an instinctive principle in our mental constitution, and equally necessary to our existence and happiness, that we should infer like effects from like causes. In the earliest stage of infancy, we find the child associating certain objects with certain sensations, desiring those which have pleased, and avoiding those, which have given him pain. Of the relation between cause and effect he has no knowledge, nor has he learned by experience to conclude the stability of nature's laws. The brute animal, in like manner, seeks for objects, similar to those,

which have gratified his appetites, and cautiously shuns such, as have offended his senses, or occasioned pain Why does either believe, that the same objects will produce the same sensations? This lesson he is not taught by reason, nor has he learned from experience; for he acts in this manner before reflection has assumed its power.

We err, perhaps, in inquiring into the ground of a belief, which, in the infant and the brute, can have no existence; neither of them being capable of that abstraction, or generalization, which is implied in the proposition, that like antecedents are followed by like consequents. One thing, however, is clear, whether we admit, or exclude, the sentiment of belief, that an association is established in the memory of each, between a certain object, and a certain sensation; and that, when the former recurs, they act, as if they foresaw, that the other would follow. This suffices for their protection. If this principle of action were to be learned only by a process of induction, and to be acquired by none but the philosopher, reasoning from the sta-

bility of nature's laws, what would become of the child, or of the animal in the common? They must perish; and the complicated organization, displayed in their corporeal structure, by which they are fitted for life and action, the provision made for their sustenance, and the continuation of their being, together with the mental powers, sensation, perception, and memory, would, in the absence of this essential principle, be utterly useless. Is it rational, then, to believe, that an instinct, which imparts utility to the whole, thus, in some measure, completing the system, and which is absolutely indispensable to our very existence, can be the communication of a blind and ignorant fatality? Is it not rather to be regarded, as the inspiration, as it is an evidence, of that wisdom, which does nothing in vain, and leaves none of its works imperfect? May we not justly pronounce it to be, as a late philosopher expresses it, "an internal revelation from on high"*, enabling man to look a little into futurity, in order to secure an absent good, and to avert a threatening evil?

* Dr. Thomas Brown

And here we take the liberty to detain the reader for a moment, while we offer an observation, for which we are partly indebted to the ingenious philosopher, whom we have just now quoted.

Man naturally estimates highly, whatever it costs him much labour to acquire; what is gratuitously furnished, or easily procured, he is prone to undervalue. He is accordingly inclined to pride himself on the knowledge, which he gains by laborious research, and scientific investigation. Truths universally known, or principles common to the philosopher and the savage, requiring neither talent nor industry to discover them, possess no attraction, which can recommend them to his regard. An acquaintance with them confers no distinction, and they are therefore held by him in no estimation. Yet, in the absence of these, on what foundation would his philosophy rest? The instinctive principle, common to him, and the brute animal, by which he anticipates with certainty similar effects from similar causes, is of infinitely more value to mankind, than all the inventions of art, and all the discoveries of science, if,

in the destitution of this principle, invention were possible. The latter may improve his condition, and furnish him with numerous accommodations and luxuries; but the former is necessary to his very existence, and essential to his advancement in knowledge, virtue, and happiness.

With memory, it has been already observed, is associated another power; and though their offices are distinct, so closely are they connected, that neither can exert itself, where sensible objects form the subject, without the aid or interposition of the other. The power, to which we allude, is imagination *, or conception—a power the subserviency of which to our

* The terms *apprehension, conception,* and *imagination,* have been employed so loosely in popular language, and so ambiguously by philosophers, as to create considerable perplexity and confusion. Apprehension has been confounded with conception, and the latter with imagination. It might, perhaps, contribute to precision, if *apprehension* were confined to speculative truths, as matters of intellect, *conception* to past sensations, and sentimental feeling, while the term *imagination* were limited to the power, by which the images of visible objects are fancifully combined. Dr. Reid, and also Mr. Hume, frequently employed the term *conception* in the same sense with *simple apprehension;* and the former has in-

intellectual gratification, and even moral improvement, is felt, and admitted, while

curred no small share of derision for asserting, that we can conceive an impossibility *. It must be confessed, that the learned author, by the loose and inconsistent manner, in which he has expressed his opinion, either subjects himself to the charge of asserting a paradox, or of controverting a position, which he himself admits. He is represented by the author of the article *Metaphysics*, in the "Encyclopædia Britannica"†, as maintaining "that any two sides of a triangle may be conceived to be equal to the third as distinctly, as that any two sides of a triangle may be conceived to be greater than the third." Dr. Reid's words, though the scope of his argument seems to justify this representation, do not by themselves convey this notion. He says, "I *understand* as distinctly the meaning of this proposition, *any two sides of a triangle are together equal to the third*, as of this, *any two sides of a triangle are greater than the third.* This is a doctrine, which no philosopher has ever disputed; and he was combating a shadow, when he supposed that Clarke, Bolingbroke, or Price, had ever maintained a contrary opinion. But to affirm, that we conceive, or apprehend, the meaning of a proposition, involving an impossibility, and that we can conceive, or imagine, an impossible existent, or what implies a contradiction, are two very different positions. From the mode of argument, which Dr. Reid has adopted, we should be justified in concluding, that he asserted the latter of these

* See "Illustrations on English Philology," by C. Richardson, Esq.

† See Third Edition.

its utility to man, as a mere animal, must be equally acknowledged. It was in the *phantasia*, as this faculty was termed by the Greek philosophers, that they believed the images of sensible objects to be preserved; while some of them taught, that intellectual ideas only are the objects of memory. But for this distinction there does not appear to be any sufficient ground; and in one view, it is objectionable, as referring to the functions of one and the same faculty, the record of facts, and the creations of fancy. It must be confessed, indeed, that in the recollection of past events, and especially of the scenes

positions, for otherwise, indeed, his reasoning would have no intelligible object; and yet he acknowledges, when he distinguishes between *conception* and *imagination*, that "*he* can *conceive* a thing, that is impossible, though *he* cannot distinctly *imagine* a thing that is impossible." With this concession, the only way, in which the author can be absolved from the charge of inconsistency, not to say of absurdity, is by supposing, that he did not mean to affirm that an impossibility can be conceived, or pictured, in imagination, but that we can apprehend a proposition involving an impossibility, in much the same sense, as in Mr. Hume's remark, "that in *all* cases when we dissent from any person, we conceive both sides of the question, but we can believe only one."

of early years, it is difficult to separate the reports of memory from the fictions of imagination. We know, that the objects of the former faculty are past perceptions, and that these recur, or are recalled, accompanied with the notion of time, and past existence, whereas the creations of the imaginative power have no necessary reference to time past, present, or future. But, though this constitutes an important distinction between the power of reminiscence and that of imagination, it is certain, that, in all our recollections, fancy frequently intrudes her creative energies, imparting a colouring of her own to the original perception. Every one must have experienced the feelings of surprise, and disappointment, when, on revisiting the scenes of early life, after long absence, he finds, that they are far from corresponding to his flattering anticipations. Memory fails to exhibit them, as they really were; and the inventive faculty, ever inclined to amplification, magnifies them beyond reality. And, as she embellishes the scenery of boyhood and youth, she portrays in glowing colours the prospects of future

years. It is thus, that she excites desire, awakens hope, inspires fear, stimulates ambition, and rouses the energies both of body and mind. Deprived of her magical, though sometimes delusive, influence, man would be a languid, a listless, and a melancholy being. Thus does imagination constitute an important and useful faculty in our mental economy.

We are so habituated to the operation of these three powers, and so familiarized to their effects, that they excite no astonishment; and yet they present to us a fact, to which in part we have already alluded, and which is calculated powerfully to excite admiration. It is this. By sensation we perceive present objects, and become acquainted with events, now passing before us; by memory we are enabled to retain or recal past perceptions, and the ideas of objects, now removed both in time and place; while by imagination we can look forward to future events and future ages. Thus does man bring the past and the future into combination with the present. Though existing only in one spot, and living only in the passing moment, he

is capable of ranging through the varied events of preceding years, and through former scenes now far distant, and at the same time of expatiating through the ages of futurity, and the boundless regions of space. He lives in the present, in the future, and the past. There is something in this capacity astonishing, and incomprehensible. It presents a phenomenon, which strikes us with wonder, combining contrarieties, which seem mutually irreconcilable, indicating the ordination of an Intelligent Power, whose eye embraces eternal ages and immeasurable space.

It is through the medium of sensation, that man becomes acquainted with external objects. The brute animal can distinguish one substance from another, and, directed by instinct, knows, which to pursue, and which to avoid—which to take, and which to reject. But he has no notion of similarity, or dissimilarity. He does not mistake things like, for things unlike; but he does not understand, wherein the difference, or the similitude, consists. Man also, as a mere animal, knows objects as different one from another, and is instinc-

tively directed to pursue what is salutary, and avoid what is noxious. The infant knows its nurse, but knows not how. It, in common with the brute animal, may be said to have the art, but not the science, of distinction. But man, as an intelligent being, is enabled to proceed farther. He begins with remarking resemblances, and thus lays the foundation of articulate language; but it is by discrimination chiefly, that he is afterwards enabled to progress in knowledge. He learns not only to distinguish one object from another, but also to discern wherein the difference consists, and ascertain the degrees of diversity, and similarity. This is a most important superiority, which man possesses over the brute creation. Sense and memory present us with the qualities of substances not singly, but in groupes. Colour, figure, and magnitude, are perceived by us simultaneously. But it is indispensably necessary to our advancement in knowledge, that we should be able to analyse these groupes, and to contemplate the qualities singly, as if separated from the substances, to which they belong. Man accordingly

possesses this capacity. When an object is exhibited to sense, or represented by conception, he is gifted with a power of dividing the impression into its constituent parts; or, to speak more correctly, of fixing his attention on any one of its sensible qualities, and regarding it by itself. He can examine its length, its breadth, its thickness, its colour, its figure, its magnitude. It is thus, that he is enabled to compare a quality, as existing in one substance, with the same quality, as existing in another, and to ascertain the degree of equality or disparity, which subsists between them. The judgements thus formed are highly important to man, not only as a being designed for the cultivation of art and science, but as a creature intended for animal enjoyment, and social intercourse. The act or power of the mind, by which we are capacitated to separate objects associated in sense, or to contemplate qualities, as if distinct from their substances, is called abstraction, and the idea has been termed an abstract idea *. Divested of

* When I say, that we have a power of contemplating a quality, accident, or property, by itself, I would not be

this faculty, by which objects, associated in sensation, are viewed, as distinct, we should be wholly incapable of scientific investigation, or philosophical research. It is indispensable to the cultivation of art, and the attainment of science. The poet must abstract before he can combine; the mathematician is conversant in abstractions only; and to the generalisations of the philosopher, abstraction is essential. The utility, therefore, of this faculty is obvious. We proceed to others.

On examining the various substances around us, we cannot fail to perceive, that they are diversified in endless variety, no two particles of matter perhaps being precisely alike. We, at the same time, observe, that notwithstanding this astonishing va-

understood to mean, that we can form an idea of it as having an independent and abstract existence. In imagination, as in sense, every sensible quality must be associated with some substance, though we may speak of it, as distinct. If we have the idea, for example, of whiteness, it must be the whiteness of paper, of snow, of marble, or of some such colourless body, to which it belongs. An abstract idea, in any other sense, is an impossibility. The designation, though sanctioned by usage, seems objectionable; *abstract notion* would, perhaps, be the preferable expression.

riety, striking similitudes obtain in different substances, some resembling others in their obvious and principal qualities. All agree in having existence; and of all physical substances extension is a common attribute. Some are inanimate, others have vitality. Some have the same colour, others the same form, some have the same taste, some agree in smell; and others answer the same purposes of either convenience, comfort, or necessity. It is thus, by an examination of the qualities and properties of substances, and a perception of these similitudes, that we are able to reduce, within comprehensible limits, infinite multitudes of individuals, which would otherwise overwhelm, and confound the mind. Whenever, then, we perceive substances resembling one another in their leading or principal characters, we comprise them all under one class or genus, and assign to them all one common name. This act or power of the mind, by which we compare and distribute individuals into *genera* or *species*, is called *generalisation* *.

* There is perhaps no subject, in the wide circle of human science, which has excited more acrimonious dispu-

In vain were man formed with the organs of articulation, capacitating him for

tation, or greater acerbity of feeling in the contending parties, than the doctrine of general ideas. And here, as in most other questions of a similar nature, the controversy was once conducted with a degree of asperity, in the inverse ratio of its importance either to religious faith, or moral practice. When Locke incautiously states, that we can form an idea of a triangle, neither right angled, nor oblique, neither isosceles, nor equicrural, nor scalene, and yet all, and none of these, the mind starts at so paradoxical a proposition, and instantly refuses its assent to so monstrous an absurdity. Every idea must be the image of an individual object. It must have a possible existent for its archetype. It cannot unite in itself incongruities, or contradictions. A substance without qualities is inconceivable; and irreconcileable qualities cannot inhere in one and the same substance, at one and the same time. No idea can be formed, uniting in itself all the similarities, which belong to the genus, and all the peculiarities, which distinguish individuals. If it is supposed to include only the characteristic qualities of the genus, these qualities cannot be imagined, but as consociated in some individual substance. I know the external distinctive characters of a human being; but I no sooner unite these in my imagination, than I form the idea of an individual. And if several other persons were to conceive and associate the same general characteristics, it is probable, that not any two of them would precisely agree in their conceptions of subordinate circumstances. Yet each conception might be a just representative of the human form, in respect to its essential characters.

It has been asked, how we can know the characteris-

the expression of his various feelings and desires, his perceptions and ideas, if he

tics of a genus or kind, without a general idea of the kind? How can we distinguish a man from a horse or a tree, without a general idea of man? It is answered, by perceiving the resemblance of the man to other beings, who have been designated by the same common name of *man*, and these beings are represented in the mind as individuals. If the notion of this resemblance should be urged, as a proof of general ideas, I would observe, that to know certain common qualities, wherein a number of individuals agree, is a thing very different from forming a general idea: for every idea must be the image of an individual, as either existing, or of possible existence. Sense and imagination can present nothing but individuals; it is the province of judgement to compare, and classify them. If by *general notion* be implied merely a knowledge of those particulars, in which a multitude of objects resemble one another, we have unquestionably general notions; for it is in this knowledge, that all language must be founded. It is from the perception of common qualities, or general similitude, that we assign the same name to similar substances. The general term is the consequent of the perception, and cannot possibly precede the general notion. We know the qualities common to all men, and when we find these in any individual, we designate him by the name common to the whole class; but we cannot imagine these qualities as existing without a subject, and when united in a subject, an individual idea is constituted. If by *general notion*, then, be signified merely a knowledge of common properties, as acquired by the understanding, through the medium of sense and memory, and which the imagination may unite

were destitute of the power of classifying or generalising the infinite multitude of objects, by which his senses are impressed, and the numberless modifications of human thought. It is only as associated with this power, that the capacity of speech is of supreme utility to man; and it is by the combination of the organic with the intellectual faculty, that he is enabled to ascend from individual truths, and particular facts, to the general conclusions of science and philosophy. The mutual aptitude of the two powers is evident, and their combination indicates design. To this part of our subject we shall hereafter have occasion to revert.

As the visual organ enables us to survey external objects, so we have a correspondent faculty in the mind, by which it is enabled to contemplate its own operations. This

in one individual image, which may be considered as a representative of the class, the reality of general notions cannot be rationally disputed; but every image or idea must be of an individual; and a general idea or mental image (speaking figuratively) of a class, is an impossibility. We may know and combine, in imagination, all the qualities common to a genus; but that combination, as has been observed, is the idea of an individual substance.

power is consciousness or reflection; and by this faculty chiefly is man distinguished from the inferior creation. Brute animals, many of them at least, possess, in common with us, sensation, perception, imagination, and reason, to a certain degree, displaying such sagacity and thought, and such accommodation to varying, and, as far as we can judge, unforeseen circumstances, as are wholly unaccountable on the hypothesis, that all their actions are referable to the blind impulse of instinctive feeling. But being destitute of that sense, which would enable them to examine these powers, and attend to their operation, they neither know their faculties, nor the mode in which they act.—They employ them unconsciously, and without reflection. Plants have neither sense nor reason; knowledge, derived from sense, would be to them of no value. It is therefore not given.—They are actuated blindly by a different principle. The brute animal reasons; he has therefore knowledge derived from sense, which is for the use of reason; but he reasons instinctively, without the knowledge or consciousness, that he does reason. Man is the only being, who per-

ceives, judges, and reasons, consciously and knowingly: he is capable of reflection; capable of looking inward to his own mind, and directing his attention to his own perceptions, ideas, and emotions. It is thus, that he becomes acquainted not only with his mental constitution as a species, but his peculiar character, moral and intellectual, as an individual. It is thus, that he is enabled to scrutinize his own heart, to investigate the springs of action, to examine his governing motives, to learn his predominant propensities, to discover, where he is vulnerable, and where he is strong,—in a word, to acquire the most important of all sciences, the knowledge of himself. If it be necessary to have a protection in sense or perception against external evils, it will not be doubted, that to be guarded against danger from within is equally indispensable to our innocence, our virtue, and our happiness. No man can be frequently exhibited to himself, without becoming wiser and better.

By abstraction, it has been observed, we disunite associated qualities, and view them without reference to the substances

to which they belong. We are thus enabled to compare them one with another, and by the faculty of judgement to ascertain not only the general relations of likeness or unlikeness, equality or inequality, subsisting between any two substances, but also the degrees, in which the similitude, or the disparities exist.

But our knowledge, if confined to simple judgements, would be circumscribed within very narrow limits. To be capable of comparing only two substances, or modes, either by intuition or examination, though highly useful to us as merely sentient beings, and in truth essential to our animal economy, would leave our intellectual constitution defective, and imperfect. Hence arises the necessity of possessing a faculty, by which we may be enabled to discover the relations of substances and modes, which we should find it impossible to ascertain by any simple act of perception, or of judgement. We may know intuitively, that A is greater than B, and that B is greater than C; but, if we must stop here, ignorant of the relation of A to C, as either greater or less, we should

never be capable of proceeding beyond the mere rudiments of science. We are therefore furnished with a power, by which this necessary operation is effected—a power, which goes far to perfect the character of man, as a being fitted for high intellectual attainments. The reader will perceive, that we here allude to the power of reason, or the discursive faculty, as it has been termed, by which man is capacitated for scientific research, for the investigation of the laws of physical and moral nature, and for the acquisition of knowledge of superlative importance to his welfare and happiness. Whatever truths or facts perception communicates, consciousness discloses, testimony establishes, memory records, or common sense teaches, form the subjects of our individual judgements; and by a series of these, proceeding by deduction, we advance, under the direction of reason, to the highest acquirements in science, and philosophy.

But, in order to perfect the system, and to give complete effect to the operation of these powers, rendering them adequate to the production of the astonishing results,

of which they are capable, there is yet another faculty, essentially requisite, which remains to be considered; we mean, the faculty of speech. This is man's peculiar and exalted privilege. It is this power which chiefly contributes to elevate him to his distinguished pre-eminence above the inferior creation, and to constitute him lord of "this lower world." To this he is indebted for the benefits of civilization, and whatever is most valuable in social life. As a solitary individual, man is an ignorant and helpless being. In this forlorn state, while in corporeal powers he yields to many of the brutes around him, his mental attainments would amount to nothing. It is the collected researches—the united observation and experience of the species, to which he owes his advancement in knowledge. By the communications of individual to individual, of nation to nation, and of age to age, arts and sciences are propagated and improved; and with them the virtue, the dignity, and the happiness of man are inseparably connected. To these communications the faculty of speech is indispensably requisite.

Divested of the capacity of framing an articulate language *, our converse, one

* Man, like every other animal, is by nature gifted with a language, intelligible to all of his own species. The audible signs, expressive of his emotions and feelings, the shriek of pain, the shout of joy, the scream of terror, the laugh of mirth, and the wail of sorrow, are universally understood. This language, however, though adequate to the expression of these passions and sensations, is wholly insufficient for the purposes of rational intercourse, and the diversified modifications of human thought. Man, therefore, is formed with an intellectual capacity and an organic power, by which he is enabled to frame an articulate language, adapted to his wants, and enlarging with his moral and intellectual improvement. The capacity is given, and the faculty is acquired; for Consummate Wisdom does nothing in vain, forbearing to impart, what we are qualified to attain. If articulate language were instinctive, it would be universally intelligible; and deaf men would speak. The structure of every language proves it to be artificial; and its capacity of expression is an infallible criterion of the intellectual and moral character of the people, by whom it is spoken.

But, though man was not gifted with an instinctive faculty of expressing his perceptions, volitions, and ideas, intelligibly to his species, it does not follow, as has been asserted, that he was ever a dumb or inarticulate animal —"mutum et turpe pecus;" or that language was formed by conventional agreement, in the progress of society, and the advancement of knowledge. Without specifying the arguments, which render this hypothesis highly improbable, we shall only observe, that man, in his prime-

with another, could be conducted by no other medium, than visible signs, and these not the signs of intelligible articulate sounds, but such as the deaf and dumb, unassisted by an alphabet, are in the habit of using. And, when we reflect, that lan-

val, or infantile state, must have had but few wants, and few ideas. His exigencies required but a scanty vocabulary; nor is there any difficulty in conceiving how audible and arbitrary signs might come to be associated with some visible objects, which might, especially at first, attract his attention, or be subservient to his necessities. These several names he would naturally, as is the practice of children, apply to other objects of the same kind. Having made a beginning, his vocabulary, though slowly, would gradually be augmented, as his mind expanded, his ideas multiplied, and his wants increased.

It is said, that without language, as consisting of general terms, man could have no general ideas. This observation is offered as an argument, that language could not have been framed by common concert, or conventional agreement. While we reject the hypothesis, which it is offered to refute, we consider the argument as having no foundation in truth. Men, born deaf and dumb, are capable of acquiring general notions. They observe the similarity of different objects, and class them in their own minds. They discriminate men from trees, rivers from hills; and, if they could speak, would distinguish them severally, by different generic names. The perception of resemblance, or of common qualities in different substances, is an act of the mind, to which the aid of language is not essential.

guage is not only a vehicle of thought, but also a powerful instrument of invention, it must be evident, that, unaided by this mighty auxiliary, our progress in knowledge would be slow, and very limited. But, while man, by his intellectual powers harmonizing with his physical organs, is enabled to construct a system of audible and visible signs, that system in turn contributing essentially to the enlargement of these powers, he is thus qualified for receiving and imparting the fruits of his ingenuity and industry, and for increasing in knowledge unlimited through successive ages. Nor to the conclusion of an Intelligent Cause, which may be drawn from this faculty, will it be admitted, as an objection of any validity, that language is not an instinctive endowment, but a human invention. The aptitude of the organs for articulate enunciation, with an intellectual capacity to avail ourselves of that aptitude, sufficiently demonstrate that concurrence of one mean with another, here a physical with a metaphysical cause, for the production of an effect, as to justify the conclusion that the effect was designed.

If the organs of speech had been wanting, or if their conformation had been unfit for the purpose of articulation, the intellectual capacity to invent language would have been of no avail. If, on the other hand, the organization had been accommodated to the emission of articulate sounds, but the intellect incapable of inventing language, aptitude of the organs for articulate enunciation would have been, in like manner, equally fruitless. Is not this mutual adjustment a conclusive evidence of design? The congruity between the organs and the intellect—of the corporeal with the mental capacity,—cannot reasonably be ascribed to chance, or any cause, which excludes intelligence.

Such are the intellectual faculties of the human mind, by the aid of which man is capacitated, as an individual, to acquire knowledge, and as a species, to advance in art and science, with a progress, bounded by no assignable limits*. When we

* In comparing the animal with the intellectual system, we find in each of them a fact exhibited, which is not unworthy of our attention, since it serves to shew, how much all our attainments depend, not on what we can accomplish for ourselves, but what is effected for us, by the

contemplate, indeed, the wonderful effects, which these powers are capable of accom-

agency of a cause, without whose co-operation all our efforts would be fruitless.

Man possesses corporeal powers, by which he is enabled to move, to labour, to defend his person, and to appropriate to himself that food, which nature supplies for his support. The exercise of these powers depends on himself; and by their instrumentality he may, if he will, provide for his necessities. So far he may be said to be the minister to his wants, and so far he may value himself on his own bodily exertions. But what would these exertions, and the procurement of the necessary sustenance avail him, without the aid of the vital powers, acting incessantly, and independently on his will? The stomach digests, the liver secretes, the lungs play, the heart beats, and the blood circulates, whether he be asleep or awake. These, be it observed, are processes, which no efforts on his part could continue for a moment, though he may contribute that nutriment, which is necessary to their support. Thus man is but the subordinate agent in the continuation of his being. There exists a Cause, whose energy accomplishes for him far more, than he can do for himself. What he is capable of effecting, is left to his own voluntary exertion; what he is unable to perform, is executed by a Superior Power. This distinction indicates a discriminating and intelligent Cause*.

In like manner in the intellectual system, man by the employment of his mental faculties, perception, memory, and reason, aided by articulate language, is qualified for the attainment of useful knowledge. The exercise of these powers, like those of our voluntary organs, in the

* See Vol. I. p. 559.

plishing, that by them man, living here on a distant spot, is enabled to explore the animal economy, depends on our own will, and is subject to our own direction. But, as without the vital powers, man's labour for the continuation of his being would be fruitless; so without the instinctive principles, which no experience can teach, no study attain, namely, our belief in the testimony of sense, in the fidelity of consciousness, in the reports of memory, with a conviction of our identity, and the innate principle of association, by which we connect like causes with like effects, all our perceptive and reasoning faculties would avail us nothing. They could not advance us one single step in our intellectual pursuits. In each system, we find the foundation laid in vital powers, and instinctive principles, for corporeal exertion, and mental energy. Indebted to ourselves for much, we owe to nature still more. Our animal labours are only periodical; those of nature are incessant. Our intellectual faculties we employ as occasion requires; but our instinctive principles are necessary in every thought, every word, and every action. Let the animal powers cease to act*; and we cease to live; let the instinctive principles be abstracted, and we are no longer conscious, thinking, reasoning, and willing beings. The former we cannot command, and the latter we are unable to acquire. Is it credible, that a brute cause can accomplish for man, what by all his perceptive and rational powers he could not effect for himself?

* We have, on several occasions, not so much in conformity to common usage, as that we may not seem to beg the question, by referring the phenomena to an Intelligent Author, employed the term *nature*, as if denoting an efficient cause, and the term *power*, as if signifying an active and inherent material principle. But we trust, that the observations, formerly offered on this subject, will sufficiently guard the reader against any misconception of our meaning.

planetary motions, to trace the cometary orbits, to measure untrodden distances in celestial space, to steer his way through the dark, untried, and trackless deep, to draw even the lightning down from the clouds of heaven, subjecting the powers of material nature to his dominion, while, at the same time, he explores the recesses of the unseen mind; when we contemplate these wonders, to believe, that such powers could originate in any possible arrangement or modification of senseless rambling atoms, seems to be the most pitiable darkness of understanding—the most deplorable perversion of the human intellect. To tell us, that these powers had no origin, is to assert a position contradicted by facts. Not only do the astonishing effects, of which they are productive, exclude the credibility of this hypothesis, but their intimate connexion with one another, their common co-operation to one end, evince their origin to be intelligence. And, if we consider for a moment, with what wonderful nicety the system is constituted in all its parts, and by what slight causes it may be deranged, reflecting, at the same time, what, without the wisdom of an Intelligent Au-

thor, it most probably would have been, we must rationally be conducted to the same conclusion. Let the adjustments established in our mental constitution be subverted, let the balance of its powers be disturbed, and the whole fabric becomes immediately disjointed, and deranged. Let imagination, for example, acquire a morbid predominance, and we either perceive the miserable hypochondriac moping in the gloom of the deepest melancholy, and brooding over his imaginary evils, or we see the maniac gnawing at his chain and raving with fury. Let reason, or common sense be wanting, and we behold the idiot with vacant stare, or unmeaning laugh, talking to his fingers, or grasping the glittering soap bubble. It matters not, whether these deplorable evils arise from mental constitution, or from causes purely physical. If the latter hypothesis should be asserted, the admirable delicacy, with which the organs are constructed, equally evinces the intelligence of their cause. If man was the offspring of chance or necessity, why is not insanity or idiotism the character of the species? It is the pitiable lot of some; why does it not pervade the

race? Is there any thing in the nature of chance, or of an ignorant fatality, which can rationally lead any mind to believe, that, though neither acquainted with causes, nor provident of consequences, it can, notwithstanding, be capable of precluding these evils from the common condition of humanity, or of preventing causes, which operate only partially, from acting generally or universally? To refer the nicety of our organization, or the due adjustment of our intellectual powers, to material properties, acting by necessity, as the sole and primary, because we perceive or believe them to be immediate, causes, is to confound proximate with ultimate agency—the effects of intelligent with those of unintelligent power. With equal reason might it be asserted, that we are not to look beyond the mechanical properties and action of the wheels of a clock, to account for its construction and its motion.

Let us now direct our attention to the active powers of the human mind, and we shall find, that they present us with additional evidence of a Designing and Intelligent Author.

SECTION VII.

KNOWLEDGE unaccompanied with action, or its application to useful purposes, would be of no value. It is its subserviency to the due regulation of our conduct, and to the supply of necessities, comforts, and pleasures, that constitutes its supreme utility and importance. For, while man possesses a mind capable of acquiring knowledge, he has likewise a soul, the subject of hopes and fears, of pains and pleasures, of desires and aversions, with other affections and passions, which stimulate him to action, and are productive of happiness or misery, as they are more or less obedient to the government of reason, improved by knowledge, guided by experience, and enlightened by religion. To desire good, is a law of our nature; and to know, wherein that good consists, and how to attain it, we have the rational faculty to direct our judgements. Passion and appetite are eager for gratification; reason controls their impetuosity, and tempers their ardour; directing them to those ob-

jects, and restraining them within those bounds, which are necessary to real and permanent enjoyment. The adjustment of a regulating to a moving power, in the construction of a machine, does not more clearly demonstrate intelligence and design, than the aptitude of reason to govern the movements of passion and appetite, which would blindly urge us to detrimental pursuits, and excessive indulgence.

Man is placed here in a world, where he is surrounded with numerous objects, calculated to excite desire, to gratify sense, and to communicate pleasure. Between these and his mental susceptibilities of enjoyment, there exists a mutual congruity, which with no probability can be ascribed to chance. We perceive a reciprocal adjustment of the objects around us, and the organs of sense. The former are fitted to impart, and the latter to receive pleasure. Certain sounds delight the ear, certain colours are pleasing to the eye, certain tastes are grateful to the palate, and certain odours agreeable to the smell; others, on the contrary, are offensive to sense. Now, unless we are to believe, that no sen-

tient being can exist, whose sensorial powers do not resemble our own, or that matter could not possibly exist without all its known qualities in relation to us, we must believe that there might be a capacity of sensation, with no external object suited to its nature. Odoriferous bodies, as they are now perceived to be, might have emitted no effluvia; and the organ of smell would have been useless. Light might have penetrated the eye, and produced no image on the *retina;* it would then have existed in vain. External bodies might not have vibrated, and the organ of hearing would have availed us nothing; and substances now perceived to be sapid, might, as is sometimes the case, have produced no affection of the palate. Or the mutual unaptitude, here supposed, might have been reversed. What, asked one of the sages of antiquity, would have been the use of odours, if there had been no olfactory organ; or where would have been the sensations of sweet and sour, if a tongue and palate had been wanting? There exists a striking and mutual congruity between our organs of sensation

and the physical objects around us, indicative of a wise and designing Cause.

Memory, as has been observed, records past pleasures; and imagination paints them in vivid colours. But something more is wanting; we must desire to possess them. The perception of a pleasure, and the wish to enjoy it, are not one and the same thing. Our nature, indeed, is so framed, that the one is a necessary consequence of the other; but this fact clearly evinces an adaptation of means to ends. If the desire to enjoy a pleasure did not necessarily follow the perception, the object capable of imparting it would exist in vain. In the absence of memory and the power of imagination, this would actually be our condition. And even with these powers, the remembrance of a past pleasure, supposing, that intelligence and design were not concerned in our formation, would not necessarily have been associated with a desire to reenjoy it. For, though it would be a contradiction to the known principles of our nature, not to desire good, there is no absolute contradiction, or absurdity, in asserting, that we might have been so con-

stituted, as to have experienced a pleasure, and not wish for its repetition. This, indeed, is so repugnant to our sentiments, feelings, and habits, that we are apt to conceive it impossible for any sentient being to be so constituted, as to be indifferent to enjoyment. This, in man, would be unnatural; but such a constitution implies no impossibility.—Nay, we might have been so made, that we were impelled by irresistible necessity to pursue pain and suffering. Why is it not so? Is it by accident, that our nature is such, that we desire pleasure, and avoid pain? Or is it by necessity, which implies the absence of all intelligence and design, that we are urged to pursue good, and shun evil? Man may, and often does, mistake the one for the other; but he never voluntarily courts pain, unless to avert greater suffering. Yet, if intelligence and goodness had not concurred in forming us, we might have been, by that blind necessity, into which the Atheist resolves our origin, so constituted, as to seek our own misery. Why is this fatal propensity excluded? Can any ignorant cause account for the fact? Or will it sa-

tisfy us to be told, that it is so, because it must be so? There is a wonderful luck in the chance of the Atheist, and a surprising method in his omnipotent necessity.

Our desires are as numerous, as the objects, which yield us pleasure, are multiplied. There is a desire of fame, of power, of wealth, of knowledge, as subservient to the attainment of pleasure; there is a desire of life and health, as necessary to its enjoyment; there is a desire of society, and of the happiness of others, and also a desire, that those, who have excited our hatred, should suffer evil. All these desires are natural. Some of them are indispensable even to our protection. They are criminal only, when indulged to excess. When confined within proper bounds, they are conducive at once to individual happiness, and the common good.

The desire of life is necessary to the continuation of our being; the desire of knowledge is essential to our advancement in art and science, as also to our improvement in virtue; it is to his desire of union in society, that man is indebted for the benefits of civilization, and those social and

sympathetic pleasures, which, next to those of religion, constitute his highest happiness. The love of fame, the love of power, the love of wealth, the love of superiority, are passions in themselves neither virtuous nor vicious. Under due regulation, they promote individual enjoyment, and the common good.

As the suggestions of reason would come too late, and would, besides, be too uncertain, for securing the preservation of the animal being, and as appetites, criminal only in excess, are therefore implanted in our constitution, compelling us to attend to nature's wants; so, as a sense of duty would, in no individual, uniformly prove a sufficient stimulus to virtuous action, nor an effectual restraint from vice; these desires compensate for its weakness, and supply its place, prompting to actions, which have all the effect of private benevolence, and public virtue. If they occasionally inflict evil, they, in far the majority of cases, produce good. Even hatred and resentment are natural, and necessary to man, in a barbarous state. They serve to deter from acts of injustice, and thus mi-

nister to our safety. What is to protect the solitary savage from the violence of his fellow, but the fear of that immediate retaliation, to which nature prompts? We repel injury, and smite the offender, as spontaneously, as we stretch forth a leg or an arm, to save ourselves from falling. They are each the effect of instantaneous and instinctive feelings, necessary to our safety. Where deliberation might be fatal, nature impels to action. Even the dread of hatred and resentment, where the protection of law is wanting, awes the robber and the assassin from deeds of violence. Hatred to vice is an auxiliary to virtue. Our indignation irresistibly swells within us, against the successful hypocrite, the audacious villain, the remorseless tyrant, who delights in the miseries of his fellow men. Our malevolence ceases to be a malignant feeling, when directed against the deliberate parricide, or the atrocity of the wretch, who with wanton cruelty sheds the blood of an innocent and defenceless fellow creature. The desire of vengeance is in such cases natural; it is allied to virtue. The offender dreads it; and it is the anticipation

of this vengeance, which often arrests the assassin's hand, when raised to strike the fatal blow. But this hatred of iniquity and inhumanity, this desire of retribution, this virtuous malevolence becomes a painful feeling, when it ceases to be necessary, thus furnishing an incontestable evidence, that man is not formed to be a malignant being.

To enquire, why the moral world should be so constituted, that hatred, resentment, and angry feelings should belong to our nature, as necessary to our safety, before reason and religion have established their authority, is to enquire, why the volcano, the hurricane, and the thunder storm should be requisite for the prevention of greater evils, or the production of greater good. This is not the place for this discussion. We shall here only remark, that such is the constitution of the moral and physical world, that the whole economy of nature seems framed, and sustained, either by a combination, or by a succession, of contrarieties; and that all physical commotions, all moral perturbations, have a natural tendency to settle into an equilibrium. The discordant elements are blended into har-

mony; and when this harmony is deranged, we uniformly find, that the bursting tempest, and angry passions exhaust themselves by their own violence, and that serenity, tranquillity, and order, soon regain their established ascendancy.

If we proceed next to consider the benevolent affections, we shall find, that their utility furnishes evidence, that they are designed for certain useful purposes, and are the ordinations of a Wise and Intelligent Cause.

Man, though occasionally found, in a savage state, a friendless and solitary being, is evidently by nature a social creature. As he is not made to live alone, but to have communion with his fellow men, it is clear, that this intercourse could not subsist, in a state of discordance, antipathy, and warfare. To the existence of society, some harmony of feeling, some unity of sentiment, some bond of attachment is necessary. This bond we find provided in the benevolent and sympathetic affections of our nature. These unite man to man. In order to promote the interchange of good offices, a reciprocity of kindly feel-

ing is indispensable. In order to receive, we must communicate. To create in others attachment towards us, we must previously manifest benevolence towards them. When selfish and sordid passions have not by indulgence gained an ascendancy, man is naturally abhorrent to violence and cruelty. Gratuitous malignity is foreign to his nature. When the savage exults in the sufferings of his victim, captured in the field of blood, it is blind superstition, or false notions of renown, that generally urge him to the infliction of torture. He regards himself as performing an acceptable duty to the shades of departed friends, slain by his enemies, or offering a grateful sacrifice to the Being, whom he worships. It may be, that a certain kind of satisfaction accompanies the gratification of every, even the most malignant, passion; but revenge itself is excited by the feeling of injury; the malevolence is not gratuitous; and whatever pleasure accompanies the deed, it is not permanent; it does not please on reflection. Does the countenance beam with delight, and the complacent tear flow, when revenge

plants its dagger in the breast of an enemy, as when, compassion, forgetful or regardless of the injury, soothes him in suffering, or rescues him, with, perhaps, a wife and helpless infants, from distress and wretchedness? Benevolence and sympathy are congenial to man; and that he may cherish and strengthen these kindly affections, it is a law of his nature, that every benevolent sentiment, every act of compassion and charity, even every tear shed over a scene of distress, or at the tale of sorrow, is accompanied with a sympathetic feeling, truly gratifying and delightful. It seems to be ordained, that, by consulting the happiness of others, we not only participate by sympathy in the common enjoyment, but are ourselves conscious of a mental gratification, more pure, more dignified, and more durable, than any animal pleasure can yield. He, who makes others rejoice, delights himself. Here then is provided, in the constitution of our nature, a benevolent and sympathetic affection, necessary to our happiness, as social beings, subject as we are to various vicissitudes and evils, to the exercise of which

affection we are powerfully stimulated by the sublime delight, which never fails to accompany the emotion.

There are some, ever anxious to degrade the character of man, who endeavour to persuade us, that our vaunted benevolence is nothing but a selfish principle, or the result of early association, originating in the nursery, or instilled in the school-room. This doctrine is not less false, than it is dishonourable to our nature. It places the effect as antecedent to its cause. It may become a question, whether any particular act of beneficence be disinterested, or selfish. A man *may* relieve distress, for the sake of enjoying the consequent gratification; but it would be absurd to suppose, that the simple feeling of good will can originate in a selfish principle, for this would imply, that the effect was known *a priori*, before the cause had any existence. And, in regard to acts of beneficence, it is evident, that, how early soever the association may have originated between the exercise of benevolence, and the accompanying pleasure, the first benevolent action must, in the nature of things, have pre-

ceded the pleasurable feeling. The good deed was done, not for the sake of a consequent gratification, for that gratification was not anticipated, since it had not been experienced, or even conceived; but the delightful feeling followed the action. The pleasure, therefore, was not the cause, but the effect of the benevolent emotion. And, when experience has taught us, that, by the constitution of our nature, the exercise of the kind and sympathetic affections is accompanied with pleasure, it does not hence follow, that the exercise is selfish. A person may satisfy the appetites of hunger and thirst, for the sake of the gratification, which accompanies the act; and so far his conduct is selfish: and he may, in like manner, exercise benevolence with a view to the pleasure, which he knows it will impart. But this neither proves, that benevolence is a factitious feeling; nor does it shew, that it is naturally, or universally a selfish principle. For, as nature might impel us to eat and drink, even if no positive pleasure attended the actions; so the emotion of benevolence might prompt us

to do good, even if no gratification followed as the consequence. But the appetite and the emotion are instinctive; and in the subserviency of the latter to the happiness of others, and the incentive to exercise it, in its tendency also to promote our own, we have a powerful argument of a Benevolent Intelligence, connecting social with individual enjoyment. The reasoning then proceeds thus. Man, as a solitary being, would never attain either knowledge or virtue. It is by associating with his fellows, that he arrives at wisdom, and power, and moral perfections. But, without the social and sympathetic affections, society could not exist. To fit him for communion with his fellow men, he possesses these affections; and as a motive to cultivate them, their exercise is accompanied with one of the most gratifying pleasures, of which our nature is susceptible. Without this motive, the instinct might be less active; without the affections, society could not exist; without society, knowledge and virtue would be unattainable; and, without these acquirements, man would be a

wretched and pitiable creature. This chain of dependent and connected circumstances furnishes evidence of design.

Every passion and every feeling of our nature is conducive to some good purpose, and they are so checked and balanced, so controlled by reason, aided by experience, that the general result is a great preponderance of happiness. Violent passion rapidly exhausts itself, and sinks into languor and repose. Fear attempers hope; hope alleviates sorrow; resentment is curbed by the dread of retaliation; anger is moderated by the consciousness of our own errors; and the fury of revenge is mitigated by sympathy for the sufferer. Do we practise, what we believe to be right? The grateful feeling of self-complacency encourages us to persevere. Do we violate our sense of duty? The upbraidings of our own minds punish us for the offence, and discourage its repetition. Is our love of praise gratified by the approbation of others? We are stimulated to higher exertions. Do we incur censure, conscious that we merit it? Shame and self-reproach forbid us to offend again. And as

pain and pleasure, joy and grief, alternately occupy the human heart, the feeling of sympathy is provided, by which while we participate in the emotions of others, rejoicing with those, who rejoice, and mourning with those, who weep, we are powerfully prompted to succour the wretched.

All these emotions, sentiments and feelings answer wise and useful purposes, and for these purposes they seem evidently designed. They stimulate us to action, and thus contribute to our happiness. A certain degree of agitation is as necessary to the health of the soul, and the enjoyment of life, as exercise is indispensable to the vigour of the body. Torpidity is wretchedness. Man, to be happy, must be occupied. While they incite to action, they knit us one to another. All the feelings and emotions of our nature are, in a greater or less degree, sympathetic. And in order to strengthen these bonds, by a closer communion, one with another, and an interchange of feelings, sentiments and desires, the power of speech, man's peculiar and exalted privilege, is superadded. A brief review of this rude and imperfect

sketch of our intellectual and active powers, will, it is hoped, serve to evince the utter improbability, that they could be produced by any other than an Intelligent Cause.

By sensation we become conscious of impressions made on the organs of sense by external objects. This power constitutes the source of all our animal gratifications. By perception, we refer certain sensations as effects to certain external objects, as their immediate causes. This faculty is necessary to our direction, in the pursuit of pleasure, and the avoidance of pain. It is essential to our safety, and furnishes the elements of physical knowledge. By consciousness, and reflection, we learn what passes within ourselves. Hence, we become acquainted with our general character, as a species, and our peculiarities, as individuals. This is the most important of all sciences. The knowledge thus acquired by external and internal sense, memory records for our future information. To this information, which would otherwise be useless, utility is imparted by the instinctive belief, that similar

causes produce similar effects. This forms a most important principle in our mental constitution. By abstraction, we contemplate the single qualities of objects, which by sense are exhibited in groupes; and by comparing them, we judge of their various relations of similitude, and dissimilitude, of equality, and inequality, as also of the degrees, in which they severally affect us, with either pleasure or pain. This power is essential to every scientific acquirement. Imagination combines and modifies these qualities, presenting a source of high mental gratification in the productions of the poet, the painter, and the statuary. With the perception of similitude is associated the power of generalisation, by which we distribute into classes our numberless sensations and ideas, and aided by the power of speech, man's invaluable faculty, reduce them within comprehensible limits. Reason completes the system; and, by her aid, we employ the facts and the judgements, which memory records, in the inventions of art, the deductions of science, and the investigations of philosophy. In this process, lan-

guage co-operates as a powerful auxiliary, acting as an organ of invention, as well as a vehicle of communication from mind to mind. Thus sensation, perception, memory, imagination, abstraction, judgement, and reason, associated with certain instinctive principles, constitute a chain of faculties, whose intimate connection one with another, and whose common subserviency to one great end, display the ordination of intelligence and wisdom. Nothing in the system is redundant; nor is any faculty wanting, which is necessary to the utility, or the exercise of the other powers. The congruity of the parts, and their harmonious concurrence, as a whole, to the purposes of intellectual improvement, displaying their united energies in the cultivation of art and science, justify us in inferring a wise and designing Author.

A review of the active principles of our nature leads to the same important conclusion. We are gifted with no instinct, endowed with no passion, born with no appetite, which is not necessary to our individual preservation, our moral improve-

ment, or our social enjoyment. And while, like conflicting principles in the physical world, they necessarily jar one with another, and produce commotion, feeling being opposed to feeling, passion to passion, and reason striving to direct and control their energies, yet by an established law, which can be ascribed to nothing but wisdom and design, and to which all the discordant elements of nature are subjected, these perturbations, evidently exceptions to the general rule, are made to issue in that *equilibrium*, in which consist the tranquillity and harmony of the system.

It has been observed, that in the constitution of the human mind, no power is redundant,—no faculty, which can be pronounced superfluous; and none wanting, which is necessary to perfect the system. As far as it goes, it is consistent and complete. Now, it is doubtless true, that there are many other animals destitute of some of these powers, while others possess all in an inferior degree, reflection and the faculty of speech excepted. But neither in man, nor in any other animal, do we observe any

superfluous sensitive power, that is, any power either unsuitable to its sphere, or at variance with its general constitution.

This naturally leads me to advert to another striking evidence of intelligence and design, which the human constitution exhibits, I mean, the congruity subsisting between the powers of the mind, and the faculties of the body, with the subserviency of the latter to the authority of the former. The mind is the agent; the body the instrument: the former the master; the latter the servant. To the volitions of the mind, as actuated by the several desires, appetites, and affections, of which it is the subject, the body is promptly obedient. If I will to move from one place to another, the limbs immediately execute the wish. If I desire to continue, or to stop the motion of the pen, with which I write, the hands and fingers are obedient to the volition. If I touch an object, which gives me pain, the muscles, as if by instinct, withdraw the hand. If I will to respire, a process, which generally goes on without volition, no fewer than 100 muscles* are instantly

* The midriff alone consisting of two or three mus-

in motion, all concurring to produce the effect. And it is a circumstance, worthy of attention, that we exert no immediate power over the muscular organs, with whose existence even we may possibly not be acquainted, but merely will to move, and the motion follows. What nerves to employ, in order to stimulate the appropriate muscles, we may be, as most men indeed are, wholly ignorant; and if we know them, it is not by any ingenuity of our own, that they are rendered obedient to our volitions. The child, and the brute animal have as complete power over these muscular agents, as the most scientific physiologist, and never err, in calling them into action. It would be a marvellous necessity, a chance truly miraculous, by which a blind man should, with no knowledge of the mechanism, and no experience of the effects, uniformly pull the

cles, suffices for ordinary respiration, and performs its office without any volition or effort of ours. But in voluntary and deep respiration, there are employed besides these, not fewer than ninety-eight muscles, sixty for inhalation, and thirty-eight for expiration. See "Nieuwentyt," vol. i. p. 89.

right strings or wires in the "fantoccini", so that every puppet shall move, in its proper attitude, at its proper time, and in its proper place. Would not his success be pronounced a moral impossibility? Yet the Atheist can believe, that tendons and muscles, still more numerous, can be regulated in their motions, without intelligence, and that no wisdom was necessary, to render them obedient to the will, and subservient to our purposes. How a volition, or mere act of the will, can give motion to a muscle, is to us wholly inexplicable? It is, because the fact is familiar to us, that it ceases to be astonishing.

Now, this subserviency of body to mind, the aptitude of the instrument to the purposes of the agent, and the promptitude, with which the muscular power obeys the authority of the will, are examples of a congruity, which are utterly irreconcileable with the irregularities of chance, or the blindness of necessity. We perceive, that in certain spasmodic affections, this power is not obedient to the volitions of the mind. In St. Vitus's dance, for example, the will is incapable of con-

trolling the irregular action of the antagonist muscles. Why is not this the usual action? Why are they not always repugnant to the will, and too powerful for its control? If chance, or blind necessity, and not design, had formed and arranged these muscles, it exceeds all probability, when their number is considered, that uniformity and regularity of action should obtain in all.

But it is not merely the subserviency of the body to the purposes of the mind, but its aptitude also, as an instrument to our mental capacities, that demands our attention, as indicative of design. What the faculties of the mind invent, the members of the body are fitted to execute. We find no incongruity between the powers of the one, and the capacities of the other. If chance had ruled at their formation, this mutual aptitude would have been a marvellous event. We might have expected to see numerous incongruities, the paw of a lion, for example, the hoof of a horse, or the web-foot of a duck, absurdly combined with the ingenuity of man. Had any of these organs been substituted for

the human hand, the energies of the mind, as now displayed in the productions of art, would have been abortive and fruitless. Genius might have invented; but there would have been no hand to execute. The absence of such incongruities, evinces wisdom and design. That the aptitudes of the organs respectively to the various classes of sentient, percipient, and thinking beings, could have been effected by an unintelligent cause, is a notion repugnant to all probability.

It affects not the argument, whether the principle in man be material, or not material, whether the brain be itself the thinking substance, or merely the organ of that substance. The adjustment of corporeal power to mental capacity, a fact, which on either hypothesis, cannot be disputed, is the solid ground, on which the argument rests *.

Thus do the intellectual powers of the human mind, harmoniously co-operating

* This important fact was adduced by Socrates, as an evidence of the wisdom displayed in the constitution of man. Ου τε γαρ βοος αν εχων σωμα ανθρωπου δε γνωμην, ηδυνατ' αν πραττειν ἁ εβουλετο· ουθ' ὁσα χειρας εχει, αφρονα δ' εστι, πλεον ουδε. *Xen. Mem.* Lib. i.

to one common and important end, qualifying man, by their united energies, for the acquisition of useful knowledge, by the cultivation of art and science. Thus do these powers, combined with the active principles of his nature, the instincts, the appetites, and passions of the soul, fitting him for becoming an active, social, and virtuous being, demonstrate the ordination of an Intelligent and Designing Cause. Here we find exhibited two distinct and complete systems, intimately connected, and mutually adjusted, one the organ of knowledge, the other the spring of action. And not only are they fitly adapted, one to the other, thus indicating wisdom in the cause; but so admirably is each constituted, that not a single faculty of the mind, not a single instinct, emotion, or feeling, can be abstracted, without essentially impairing, if not destroying, the utility of the whole. The prompt subserviency of the body to the determinations of the will, without which we should feel, and think, and will, in vain, by indicating adjustment, conducts to the same conclusion, that "man, fearfully and wonderfully

made," is formed not by ignorance, but in consummate wisdom. Thus do mind and matter—the physical, intellectual, and moral worlds,—evince the existence of a Supreme and Intelligent Power.

When the Atheist, abandoning the hypothesis of chance, as repugnant to the acknowledged principles of probability, and utterly incredible, would refer such wonderful combinations of causes and effects, such striking aptitudes of means to ends, displaying dependencies, connections, and congruities of relation, so as to excite even his own astonishment, to the agency of necessity, he offers a hypothesis, which, to minds governed in their convictions by common reason, seems superlatively irrational. In violation of his own favourite maxims, and in contradiction to the known principles of human belief, he must, consistently with his hypothesis, maintain, that what is essentially unintelligent, may impart or generate intelligence, that what has no wisdom, may act with wisdom, and that the effects of knowledge and ignorance, providence and improvidence, accident and design, are indiscri-

minately alike. He affirms, that no event has taken place, or could have taken place, but what necessarily resulted from the previous circumstances. He maintains, that we may conceive and suppose many possibilities, not realized by facts, as we may conceive any thing, except contradictions; but he asserts, that every thing must have been, as it has been, and that there has existed an endless chain of causes and effects, connected by an eternal and inflexible necessity.

Now, we are not disposed to contend, that suppositions are to be received as facts; nor do we mean to maintain, that, from any given previous physical circumstances, any other, than the result, which did issue, could have followed. We will not affirm, that there might have been more or fewer planets, than there now are in the solar system, or that the Nile might have flowed into the Atlantic Ocean, under the pre-existing physical causes. But, though we reject the hypothesis of objective contingency, believing that the laws of nature operate uniformly by the will of their Great Author, and that certain definite causes

must, by his appointment, be followed by certain definite effects, we deny the Atheist's position, that the operating causes act by an eternal and brute necessity. We, on the contrary, believe and affirm, that their necessary agency cannot be their own, but the ordination of a Superior Power—the passive subserviency of matter to the purposes of intelligence. We have assigned reasons for this conviction. But as the hypothesis of an eternal necessity is that, which modern Atheists are inclined to adopt, we will, at the risk of incurring the charge of some repetition, state our reasons more fully for this persuasion.

1st, Then, we reject the hypothesis of an eternal necessity, because it is gratuitous. It is neither proved, nor is it capable of proof. It has no other foundation, than the assumption, that matter has existed from eternity, and that its powers and properties are essentially and independently its own. What evidence can the Atheist adduce in favour of this assumption? He appeals to experience, assuring us, that, in all matters of fact, she is the only sure and infallible guide. The appeal will not avail

him. What does experience teach us? Merely what has been. Does she teach us also, that it has been by necessity? We confidently assert the negative, and challenge the Atheist to prove his position. We perceive the same effects uniformly resulting from the same causes; but we have no evidence whatever, that this uniformity results from a necessity eternally inherent in matter. Will the Atheist venture to assert, that a limited experience can prove an eternal or necessary existence? The proposition is absurd. What is finite cannot extend to infinitude; and myriads of ages are as a point to eternity. Will he urge, that he perceives in our globe no traces of a beginning? Is his perception then to be assumed, as a measure of existence? Can that have no origin, of which his limited vision cannot discern the commencement? Or will he maintain, that, because man cannot create, matter must be uncreated? The Atheist may dignify such dogmas with the name of philosophy; we scruple not to pronounce them irreconcileable with its spirit. They are the offspring of vanity and arrogance, with

which true philosophy disclaims all fellowship, and all affinity.

2dly, Experience enables us to anticipate certain effects from certain causes; but does she give us any information, where the power resides, by which these causes operate? We perceive a reciprocal action between two substances; but the power is unseen; it is not an object of perception; and the question is, whether that power be the unintelligent agency of an ignorant necessity, or the attribute of a wise and designing Cause. This question must be decided on the self same principles, on which we determine all other questions of a similar kind, deducing the character of the power from the nature of its effects. This enquiry will lead us to any conclusion, but that of a blind necessity.

3dly, Necessity furnishes no satisfactory explanation of the phenomena. If chance, as an unintelligent cause, be incapable of accounting for the production of our system, every other unintelligent cause must be equally incredible, and equally unsatisfactory. To say, that a statue, a house, or a ship, exist, because

they could not but exist; or that they came into existence by a physical necessity, influencing the atoms, of which they are composed, would be a ridiculous and unphilosophical explanation of their origin. Is it not equally extravagant and absurd to tell us, that this globe and its organic beings exist, because they could not but exist, and that material atoms, acting by necessity, could not but congregate into plants and animals, assuming the forms and qualities of roots, stems, and leaves, bones, muscles, and nerves, and each assuming its proper place with due regularity, and in perfect order. It is by a physical necessity, that the letters of the alphabet, thrown at random from a bag, take a certain position; but it would be one of the most miraculous of all events, if they lay in their proper order.

How brute particles, having one essential nature, and all the same common qualities, were to acquire the specific properties of vegetable, animal, and intellectual beings, in the absence of all organic substances, he prudently does not attempt to explain. This observation naturally suggests the following objection.

4thly, We have no example of a being producing another of a higher order than itself. We perceive, it is true, organic intelligent forms generated from unintelligent matter; but it is through the agency of intelligent organisms. We see particles, brute and senseless, becoming vital and sentient beings; but it is through the medium of life and sense, as existing in the causes. Now men and other animals must have either existed from eternity, or must have had a beginning. Of their existence from eternity, in the very nature of things, we can have no proof.—Our experience can furnish no rational ground for such a conclusion; but various phenomena furnish evidence, that they had an origin. If so, we call upon the Atheist to specify a single fact, to shew, that material particles, senseless and unintelligent, could of themselves produce sentient and intelligent beings. Until he exhibit satisfactory evidence of such a production, we deny, that sensation, perception, and intelligence, could originate in the agency of senseless, impercipient, and unintelligent atoms. And, if such a

phenomenon were actually presented, the question would still be, not what is the fact, but what is its primary and efficient cause.

5thly, When all possibilities, except the realities, which now exist, or have existed, are denied by the Atheist, and when he affirms, that nothing could have been otherwise than it has been, or now is, he must at least allow, that such possibilities are certainly conceivable; and, if not excluded by necessity, were, and still are, possible. He must acknowledge, that a different law of gravitation, a different density of the atmosphere, a different ratio of its component gases, or an entire absence of the fluid, a different degree of light and heat, a different proportion of land to water, a different celerity in the circulation of the blood, a different arrangement of the bones, muscles, and nerves of the body, to say nothing of thousands of other conceivable differences, may be imagined. Some of these differences, we have reason to believe, actually exist in the other planets. Now, if these phenomena may not only be conceived, but really do exist, is it not

incredible, that, out of all imaginable ratios and relations, those only should obtain in our system, which are beneficial and salutary, and that too by a necessity, which excludes all knowledge of means and ends, all acquaintance with aptitudes and incongruities? It excites astonishment, that a hypothesis so monstrous should gain the assent of any rational mind. Surely no person, however much inclined to fanciful theories, and bold assertion, will venture to affirm, that there is a shadow of reason for believing, that Saturn and Mercury would be fit habitations for human beings. Is it not then evident, that there are physical conditions, not only possible, but real, which would be adverse, not to our comfort and happiness only, but to our very existence?

If we descend to our own system, we shall find it exhibiting injurious concurrences, and partial irregularities. These are more than mere possibilities; they are matters of fact. Now, if we found no exceptions to the ordinary course of events; if there were no untoward collisions of conflicting laws, no perturbations, if all were

uninterrupted regularity, the hypothesis of an eternal necessity, as the Atheist assumes, would be a natural conclusion. We should then have no conception of disorder, no notion of evil, no idea of contingency. But this is not the condition of our system. We find anomalies and evils resulting from the operation of existing causes; we find these causes so nicely adjusted, that the slightest alteration is accompanied with disorder, not only in the physical, but also, and especially, in the moral and intellectual world. The earthquake and the volcano, the hurricane and the pestilence, famine and disease, malformations in the vegetable and animal creations, the mental imbecility of the fool, and the insanity of the lunatic, clearly prove, that evils are not only possibilities, but realities. And, if an unintelligent necessity had presided, we can see no cause, but what is gratuitously assumed, why this necessity should not have produced, if not a preponderance of these evils, at least an equal number of direct, as of incidental, disorders—why half the globe is not perpetually suffering under volcano, or earthquake, or

why idiotism or insanity are not as general as their contraries.

The Atheist then cannot deny, that detrimental concurrences, with their consequent evils and disorders exist; and we are justified in inferring from the aptitude of the means, by which they are generally excluded, not only that, in the absence of intelligence, they might have been indefinitely increased, but also, until the Atheist has proved, and not merely assumed, his *eternal necessity*, that other irregularities and injurious concurrences, as conceivable, were also possible.

It is vain for the Atheist to reply, that all irregularities, as well as the general order, result from the same necessity. If necessity is capable of producing irregularities, we desire to know, why general confusion, instead of order and harmony, is not the condition of our system; why this necessity does not give birth to monsters of hideous form, "Gorgons and chimeras dire," in endless variety. To tell us, that they are precluded by necessity, is to tell us, that they are not, because they cannot be. If we ask, why they cannot

be, or why anomalies, since they do exist, are not found in far greater numbers, his answer is, because they are precluded by necessity. In this idle repetition of the same gratuitous assertion, which mocks common reason, satisfies no enquiry, explains no phenomena, confounding ignorance with intelligence, terminates the argument of the Atheist.

6thly, The hypothesis of necessity would exclude the possibility of a fact, which the Atheist himself cannot rationally deny.

When we contemplate the physical world, we behold a system displaying order, regularity, and beauty. We find the whole of nature governed by determinate laws, the same effects uniformly resulting from the same causes. Even those sudden and violent changes, which are at variance with the general order of the system, we justly regard, as under the government of the same fixt and universal rules. If the thunder-storm, or the hurricane, interrupt the wonted harmony of nature, whatever difficulty we may experience in investigating their causes, we never doubt for a moment, that these convulsions, with all irregulari-

ties and deviations from the general order of things, are effected by the operation of the same laws, as those, which govern the usual phenomena of the universe. While the Theist refers these laws, and the general order, to the ordination of a Supreme and Intelligent Ruler of the world, the Atheist ascribes all to the properties and powers of matter, acting by necessity. Observing the same previous circumstances uniformly followed by the same result, he construes this constant conjunction of certain phenomena into necessary connection, and infers, that what happens uniformly, happens necessarily. Order and regularity are with him irrefragable evidences, not of intelligence or design, but of fate, or blind necessity. Let us examine the consequences to which the principle, which he assumes, would necessarily lead, and how far it is consistent with a truth, which he himself cannot but admit.

The Atheist denies, that the constitution of nature furnishes sufficient evidence of the existence of Deity. But he will not, we presume, proceed so far as to affirm, that a Deity cannot exist, or that the universe

might not have been so constituted, as to impress even his own mind with the firm conviction of a Supreme and Intelligent Cause. He must, we presume, admit, that, as the doctrine of Theism involves no absurdity, the existence of Deity is at least possible, and, as such, might have been capable of proof by moral evidence, so as to command even his own assent. Now surely, that must be a fallacious mode of reasoning, which leads to a contradiction, excluding that from the possibility of proof, which is at the same time admitted to be susceptible of proof. Bearing in mind, then, that the leading principle of the Atheist is that of necessity, we shall find, on examination, that his admission and his hypothesis are mutually repugnant. If his admission is just, his hypothesis is false; if his hypothesis be sound, he must retract his admission.

It is evident, that the existence of Deity cannot be an object of perception. This proposition requires no proof, for the affirmative would be absurd. A visible Deity would be finite, and therefore no Deity. Again—the Atheist himself, as has been

just now observed, will not maintain, that the existence of Deity is an impossibility. A Deity then may exist. But, if his existence is possible, and the proof of this existence likewise possible, it is evident, that, as this proof cannot be founded in the evidence of sense, it can be derived only from the constitution of nature, as exhibited to our powers of observation, reflection, and reason. Now, as the Atheist admits, that the existence of Deity is possible, if it can be shewn, that the constitution of our system is the only one, from which this existence can be concluded by our faculties, it will prove, 1st, that the Atheist is unreasonable in requiring other evidence; and, 2dly, that he involves himself in the contradiction of believing, that a fact is capable, and at the same time incapable, of proof by any possible constitution of things.

Every conceivable economy of the universe must be distinguished by one or other of these three leading characters, either perfect order, and perfect happiness, or complete disorder, and consummate misery, or by a mixture of good and evil, order and confusion.

We shall suppose the universe, or rather the system, to which we belong, to have been so constituted, that nothing were visible around us, but uninterrupted order, and unmixed good. Would not a perfect economy like this, evidence the existence of a Supreme Being? Would it not convince the Atheist, that the system must have originated from infinite wisdom, consummate power, and unchangeable goodness? Certainly not. If he reasoned then, as he reasons now, he would still deny the existence of Deity. The regular and unceasing issue of good from every change of circumstances, the uniform succession of scenes of order and happiness, would furnish the same plea for ascribing all to necessity, and for maintaining the essential and uncommunicated powers of matter, as the present system affords him now. Would he not maintain, consistently with his principles,—nay, ought he not to believe, in consistency with these principles, that every change takes place by the operation of certain properties and powers essentially inherent in the subjects themselves,—that universal and unvaried uni-

formity evinces necessity of action, and that as the properties of attraction and repulsion, or any others, which might exist in such a system, were uniformly, and without exception, found to belong to matter, we must infer, that they essentially belong to its nature? Would he not contend, that the constant and invariable regularity, with which every antecedent phenomenon were followed by its consequent, all disorder, all contingency being excluded, furnished irresistible evidence, that the system was such by necessity, and that constant conjunction demonstrated necessary connexion? Does regularity, does harmony, universally prevail? It is owing to a principle of order. Is every change productive of good? It arises from a principle of necessity. Does perfect and uninterrupted happiness universally obtain? It is ascribable to the essential nature of things. In short, we do not perceive, how a system so constituted could furnish the Atheist, reasoning on his professed principles, with any argument whatever, that a Deity exists.

Perhaps it may be urged, that the ex-

istence of unintermitted order, and universal happiness, would afford an evidence of superior intelligence and goodness,—an evidence, which a mixt constitution, like the present, does not furnish. In answer, we observe, 1st, that the character of the phenomena, as uniformly good or evil, could nowise affect the conclusion of the Atheist; because it is not from their quality, as good or bad, but from their uniform regularity, that he infers the necessary connexion between them and their causes. It is not, because the result is beneficial or injurious, that the Atheist considers attraction and repulsion to be inherent properties of matter; but because, wherever he finds matter, he discovers it possessing these qualities. The goodness, therefore, of the effect, would furnish him with no argument, that the properties were communicated; on the contrary, from their uniform operation, and their universal existence, he must, consistently with his principles, conclude, that they are essential to matter, and inseparable from its being. Referring order to a principle of order, as its necessary cause, he might, with the same propriety,

refer happiness to a principle of happiness. The one hypothesis is quite as just, and as tenable, as the other.

2dly, We observe, that under such a system he could form no conception of any other state, having never experienced evil of any kind. It would be as impossible for him to form any idea of pain, of sorrow, of trouble, or of care, of famine, tempest, or earthquake, as for a man born blind to have a conception of colour. Incapable, therefore, as he must be, of having any notion of evil, moral or physical, it would be utterly impossible for him even to imagine a state different from that, in which he existed, and which he would therefore ascribe to the necessary and unalterable nature of things.

If a system so constituted could exhibit to the Atheist no evidence, consistently with his mode of reasoning, that a Deity exists, it is surely superfluous to prove, that a system, distinguished by a principle of constant conjunction, and productive of complete misery, would avail nothing towards his conviction of the existence of a Great First Cause. The regular and un-

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varying concatenation of certain antecedents and certain consequents, would furnish the same argument for concluding, that all was necessary, that all resulted from certain properties in matter, and that to these properties the system, and all its parts, owed their existence.

Let us now suppose a world, in which there were no regularity, in which a principle of constant conjunction did not obtain—a system, in which no given previous circumstances were followed by one and the same effect, but where a variety of different results were produced by one and the same cause. Here, it is evident, would be a state of utter perplexity and confusion. No human wisdom could anticipate any event. From what had been, it would be impossible to conclude, what might be. Experience would be fruitless. The same previous circumstances being followed by different results, and contrary antecedent circumstances by one and the same effect, every change could be ascribed to nothing, but accident; or, to speak more correctly, he could have no conception either of accident or of design. For, no connexion

subsisting between antecedent and consequent phenomena, now one result, now a second, and then a third, following in various and endless succession, and all issuing from one and the same previous state, disorder and regularity continually prevailing, it would be impossible to associate any two phenomena as cause and effect, or even to form a conception of such a mutual relation. Of design or intelligence, no evidence could exist,—the attributes themselves could have no place, nor could there be any notion of a Supreme First Cause.

Thus it is clear that, whether we suppose a system, in which, by the uniform operation of definite causes, universal happiness were produced, or a system, in which universal misery obtained, or a state, in which all were chaos and confusion, good and evil issuing from the same antecedent circumstances, it is evident, we affirm, that consistently with the reasoning of the Atheist, we should have no ground for believing in the existence of Deity. Now, these are the only three conceivable states, different from the present, in which man-

kind could exist. Hence it follows, that, while the Atheist must admit that the existence of a Supreme Being is possible, and that the proof of such existence is likewise possible, his admission and his doctrine are mutually at variance. That reasoning cannot be correct, or that hypothesis true, which involves a contradiction, acknowledging a possibility, which the principle, which it assumes, would exclude as impossible.

When a dogmatist abandons the common principles of reason, and pertinaciously maintains an opinion, which not only affords no explanation of facts, but which is likewise so irrational, that no truth clearer than its absurdity can be adduced in its refutation; it may be useful to shew that his hypothesis is irreconcileable with his own judgements, and may be retorted in opposition to his own convictions, though founded on the clearest and most unquestionable evidence. Let us in illustration put the following case: Let it be supposed, that all records of some work of great antiquity have perished, or that there never was extant any memorial of its origin. Let it be

supposed, for example, that history is totally silent respecting the pyramids of Egypt, and that no period can be named, when these stupendous structures did not exist. Let them be exhibited to a person pertinaciously adhering to the dogmas of the Atheist. He either denies, that they had an origin, or he maintains that they were the productions of a physical necessity. The Atheist impugns this extravagant opinion, and enquires how it is possible for the hypothesis to account for the facts. "Nothing," replies the other, "is more easily conceived. The particles, of which the stones are composed, arranged themselves into their present forms." "How?" inquires the Atheist. "By necessity," replies the other; "they could not possibly have been of any other shape, than they assumed at the time of formation." "But," the Atheist asks, "how were they placed in this regular order?" "By necessity," replies the dogmatist, "no other arrangement was possible: it was the necessary result of the previous circumstances." "But," says the Atheist, "this assertion is not conformable to experience; we have

no example of stones raising themselves to such heights in opposition to the law of gravity." "True," replies the other, "but these are structures far older than the records of time; and matter may have, in ancient ages, possessed properties, which are now exhausted and extinct. The earth may have had a repelling power, acting on small masses. We know not, what the faculties of nature may have been at that period." "But," contends the Atheist, "they seem constructed for a certain purpose." "No, no," exclaims the other, "that is mere hypothesis; we have no right, without positive testimony, to say that the purpose answered was ever intended. The effect, and the means, by which it is accomplished, furnish no evidence of design." "But," the Atheist observes, "here is an inscription on one of the stones, which we can read. Does not this indicate design?" "By no means," replies the dogmatist, "design is not requisite to account for this. The characters formed and arranged themselves, by the necessity of their own nature. They could not have assumed any other shape, or any other

order." "But they have a meaning, and must have been intended to express what they do express." "No; certainly," rejoins the other, "they have a meaning, it is true, but the meaning was not designed. It is the accidental effect of a physical agency. The supposition of intelligence is wholly gratuitous; the whole was effected by a resistless and inflexible necessity." Would the Atheist admit this explanation as either rational or satisfactory; and yet the reasoning of his opponent, if the mere assertion of a dogma can be termed reasoning, is strictly his own. To account for the existence of a complicated organism, or a curious machine, by referring us to an unintelligent necessity as its cause, telling us that the thing is, because it must be, is indeed a brief and convenient mode of resolving the question of its existence. It possesses also this singular advantage, that, though it explains nothing, it cuts all difficulties short, by furnishing the dogmatist with a laconic answer to every puzzling enquiry, namely, "necessity," "by necessity." Is this answer itself dictated by

an unintelligent necessity? This question we leave to the Atheist to decide.

To conclude; the hypothesis of an eternal material necessity amounts to this, that senseless atoms cannot but produce sentient beings; that what has no intelligence cannot but create intelligence; that what has no notion of order cannot but establish order; that particles devoid of beauty and utility cannot but arrange themselves into useful and beautiful forms; that what has no conception of purpose, acts, notwithstanding, so as to accomplish beneficial effects; that what has no foresight, acts with the wisdom of providence; that what has no knowledge of its own powers cannot but direct these powers to the production of good. The Atheist, who can embrace a hypothesis, involving paradoxes so repulsive to common understanding, has no reason to doubt the capacity of his faith.

SECTION VIII

The leading propositions in favour of Theism re-stated, with concluding observations on the doctrine of an Intelligent First Cause, as compared with the hypothesis of the Atheist.

It has been our object in the preceding pages to shew, that the hypothesis of the Atheist, by which he would account for the existence of the universe, as resulting from chance or from necessity, is utterly incapable of explaining the phenomena. It has been our endeavour to prove, that it is founded on nothing but gratuitous assumptions, extravagant conjectures, obscure and unsatisfactory abstractions, incredible suppositions, unwarranted by any known fact, and palpable improbabilities, which the Atheist himself, in all his other reasonings, intuitively rejects. If, then, the phenomena are wholly inexplicable on the hypothesis of chance or necessity, it follows that they must be the effect of intelligence and design.

But, though, in order to establish the

doctrine of an Eternal and Intelligent Author of the universe, it would be quite sufficient to shew, that the hypothesis of the Atheist is repugnant to the acknowledged principles of probability, and superlatively irrational, we are not left to advocate our cause, or to rest our faith, on the ground of evidence merely negative. Our doctrine is supported by direct and positive argument, founded on principles which govern the conviction and the conduct of the Atheist himself—principles clear, simple, and familiar to the understanding of every man who is capable of common reflection, and can distinguish between brute agency and intelligent power.

In submitting to the examination of the reader the ground, on which we maintain the existence of a Supreme Being, our reasoning was introduced with observing, that the question of Deity is a question of actual or substantial existence; and, like all others of the same kind, must be determined by moral, and not metaphysical, evidence. A fact may be known to us by sense, or by consciousness, and recollected by memory; but it must be proved by the

testimony of other facts. The simple question then is, does the constitution or general economy of nature, physical and intellectual, exhibit facts or phenomena, which warrant us to infer, with doubtless certainty, the existence of an Intelligent and Designing Power?

In order to resolve this question, we premised two propositions. The first is, "That wherever we find order and regularity existing, where the possibilities of disorder are indefinitely numerous, we necessarily infer design." The second is, "That from complicated concurrences of means to ends, in a vast variety of instances, we in like manner necessarily conclude a designing cause." The deduction is inevitable. It forces itself on our conviction; nor is its truth ever disputed even by the sceptic or the infidel. It has mathematical probability for its foundation; it is irresistibly suggested by the consciousness of design and contrivance in ourselves; it is confirmed by the observation of the effects of design and contrivance in others, our own natural conclusions being confirmed by their own testimony. But if this ex-

press evidence were wanting, we should necessarily refer similar effects to similar causes. Our adversaries themselves must acknowledge, that even many of the brute creation, incapable of communicating to us what passes within them, exhibit what they consider to be evidences of contrivance. Our inference then is one to which we are irresistibly led by consciousness and reflection, by analogy, by the primary and instinctive principle, by which we associate like antecedents with like consequents—in short, by the obvious and established rules by which we distinguish between ignorance and knowledge, between physical force and intellectual power, between the results of chance and the productions of intelligence.

It is one of the leading maxims of the Atheist, the truth of which we do not mean to dispute, that we may reason with moral certainty from actions to motives, or from general conduct to intellectual and moral character. This acknowledged connection, between mental qualities and their necessary effects, his Atheistic hypothesis would utterly annihilate. To confine the maxim

to human agents, or the conclusion to human arts, is absurd. Design and intelligence do not alter their nature by their varying effects. There is contrivance in the erection of a cottage, as in the construction of a palace; and to admit it in minor, and deny it in nobler productions, is egregious inconsistency. If wisdom consist in the adaptation of means to beneficial ends, or, if from striking concurrences and aptitudes of causes to effects we infer its existence, whatever diversity may be discoverable in these effects, its essential character remains the same. It is still wisdom; and our conclusion of its agency is equally just, whether these aptitudes and concurrences are displayed in nature, or in art*. It would indeed be most preposterous to assert, that wisdom is requisite to accomplish much, but quite unnecessary to achieve more; or if the effect be within the compass of human art, to ascribe it to

* "Nature", says Hobbes, "is the art by which God governs the world." The lines of Pope are to the same purpose—

"All nature is but art, unknown to thee,
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see."

ingenuity; but if it exceed all human intelligence and power, to assign it to ignorance.

On these two propositions, then, is our reasoning founded. And we trust that the number of facts, drawn partly from the physical constitution of our system, and partly, but more especially, from the organic structure and intellectual constitution of man, is amply sufficient to establish a rational and full conviction of an Intelligent First Cause, in every mind not beclouded with the darkness of Scepticism, or bewildered in the labyrinths of metaphysical sophistry.

We shall now conclude our discussion of this important and deeply interesting subject, with a few additional observations on the question, as abstracted from all accessory considerations; enquiring at the same time which of the two conclusions, that of the Theist, or the Atheist, is the more satisfactory to the human mind, and in which the understanding the more rationally acquiesces.

It can hardly be necessary to call to the recollection of the attentive reader, that

the subject of the preceding enquiry has been simply this, whether the phenomena of nature display such order, beauty, and regularity—such concurrences of complicated means to useful ends, that we must either refer them as effects to intelligence and design, or violate the established principles of human belief. Whether the wisdom, which we deduce from the works of nature, be that of one or more intelligent beings, that is to say, whether there were one or more Creative Powers concerned in the production of the universe—is a distinct question, and will become the subject of our next enquiry. Our argument has directly proceeded no farther than the demonstration of intelligence and design, as manifested in the surrounding phenomena. In our observations, indeed, we have presumed the existence of only one Intelligent Cause: but the doctrine of the Divine unity yet remains to be proved. And here may we be permitted to offer, in passing, one admonition to the reader. It is this: If the phenomena of the universe, but more particularly of the system, in which we are placed, exhibit to us striking and convinc-

ing evidence, that there must be an Eternal and Intelligent Being, the incomprehensibility by us of the mode in which He exists, our inability to solve the mysteries of His government, and reconcile them with our imperfect conceptions of right and wrong, may be considered as arguments of our ignorance, but should have no influence in weakening our faith in the existence of a First Cause. This is an admonition, which cannot be too strongly impressed on the mind of every person, who engages in this momentous enquiry, and is desirous to arrive at a clear and rational conclusion. We repeat, let the argument in favour of Theism be candidly and deliberately examined; and, if we rise from the enquiry with a full conviction, that the hypothesis of Atheism is loaded with the most incredible assumptions, and the most revolting improbabilities, and that we have superabundant evidence for the firm persuasion that there must exist an Intelligent, though Invisible, Being, the Great Original of the universe,—to abandon this conviction, because the constitution of our little world does not, *in every respect*, accord with our little no-

tions of right and wrong, presenting some difficulties, which we cannot explain, is an argument not surely of sound reason, but of inconsideration and conceit.

Having offered, in passing, this admonition, we proceed to observe, that the Theist, and the Atheist concur in believing that something must have existed from eternity. The former maintains that this something is an Intelligent Being; the latter, that it is mere matter. Now, as far as these two hypotheses, in the abstract, are concerned, the Atheist must admit, that his possesses no superior claim to our assent. He must acknowledge, that we know quite as much of the agency of mind or intellect, as of unorganized matter; and that the eternity of the one is just as easy, or as difficult, to be apprehended, as the eternity of the other. Nay, we may doubt, as some have doubted, of the existence of matter; but we cannot doubt, that we perceive, think, and will. Which of the two then, on other grounds, comes most powerfully recommended to our adoption? Which is the most satisfactory to the mind? Which, after an unprejudiced review of the pre-

ceding arguments, is most justly entitled to our assent? If we believe, that the world is the production of an Intelligent Cause, or that this globe of ours is the work of a wise and designing Author, its origin and its constitution receive the same satisfactory explanation, as when we refer a piece of mechanism to the ingenuity of an artizan. If a statue is attributed to a sculptor as its cause, or a house to an architect, the production is accounted for, and the mind is satisfied. But, if we reject intelligence, and refer the phenomena of the universe to the direction of chance or necessity, if these can be supposed to be capable of directing, or to act as causes, is this hypothesis equally satisfactory, equally free from difficulty and embarrassment? Is not the Sceptic forced to resort to visionary conjectures, gratuitous assertions, and the most incredible suppositions, not within the limits of known physical possibility, to account for the order and harmony of nature, and the production of animal and vegetable beings? Is he not compelled to feign hypothesis after hypothesis, having no better foundation than a

rambling fancy, assuming certain powers of attraction and repulsion, certain motions and conglomerations, revolutions and collisions, globules and filaments, appetencies and antipathies, matrices, metamorphoses, and lucky combinations, all of which are really so whimsical and absurd, that, in the absence of attesting facts, we should find it difficult to believe, that men of understanding should gravely propose them for our assent. And, when fancy itself is exhausted in feigning schemes for the construction of the material universe, has he not to encounter the difficulty, not to say the impossibility, of explaining how intellect originated from brute matter—*how vitality, perception, imagination, memory,* and reason could, without the intervention of intellect, be produced by the union of senseless atoms, having no other qualities, properties, or accidents, than figure, magnitude, and motion? Refer the whole to an Intelligent Cause, and the question is satisfactorily resolved: refer it to chance, and the phenomena are utterly inexplicable. What then does the Atheist gain by his hypothesis? He denies the

eternity of intelligent power, which can account for every thing, and asserts the eternity of matter, which satisfactorily accounts for nothing. Does the Atheist, in order to escape from the embarrassments of this hypothesis, profess to believe, that animals and vegetables have existed on this globe from eternity? It may be asked, is there less difficulty in conceiving an eternal succession of sentient and intelligent beings with no first cause, than in conceiving an Eternal First Cause? Does not our reason feel a strong repugnance to the belief of this series of causes and effects, without beginning, and without end? For, though it is impossible to demonstrate its absurdity by metaphysical argument, the mind, in essaying to travel back through this endless chain of phenomena from link to link, finding no original, no resting place, returns from the investigation exhausted and bewildered, with the imagination perplexed, and the understanding dissatisfied. It labours to find a cause, but finds none, which has not been previously an effect.

While the Atheist thus maintains a hypothesis, against which the mind naturally

revolts, as repugnant to its feelings and involving it in darkness, the doctrine of Theism clear, consistent, and satisfactory in itself, rests on principles, which, with irr es istible evidence, command our assent. Their truth even the Sceptic himself is uniformly found to acknowledge, by his sentiments and conduct in the business of common life. They are so obvious, so simple, and so intelligible, that no sophistry can darken them. The Theist resorts to no fanciful suppositions, no extravagant cosmogonies, confounding substances with abstractions, names with causes, and phenomena with powers; but appeals, for the foundation of his faith, to a body of evidence, not founded in conjectures, but derived from facts, presented in the phenomena of the visible universe. He not only perceives in the order, the beauty, and the utility displayed in the constitution of surrounding nature, but he feels, that he carries within himself the most astonishing and conclusive evidence of a wise, powerful, and designing Cause. Whether he lifts his eye, and contemplates the orbs of heaven, rolling over his head in solemn grandeur, and ceaseless harmony; or whether he looks

downward, and examines the humblest herb, the meanest flower, or the little insect, almost too minute for human vision, yet perfect in its frame, and adapted to its sphere; whether he surveys the verdant meadows, the smiling corn, the running stream, the falling shower, or the mighty ocean, all ministering by complicated means to the sustenance and enjoyment of countless myriads of animated beings—whether he looks to earth or to heaven, he beholds resistless proofs, that verily there is a God, who formed the universe. Prostrate in deep humility before His adorable Majesty, and with emotions of delight and reverential astonishment, he secretly ejaculates, "Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord; in wisdom hast thou made them all."

SECTION IX.

Matter has not existed from Eternity.

THE important truth, that there exists an Intelligent Architect of the universe being

demonstrated, the next question that presents itself, refers to a point which is confessedly of inferior moment, but which has given rise, notwithstanding, to much metaphysical controversy. The question is, did matter exist from eternity, or had it a beginning? Was this globe, or, to extend the question indefinitely, was the universe formed out of matter eternal and self-existent? or was matter itself created by that same Being, to whom we ascribe the construction of the universe? This is a question, respecting which philosophical Theists, ancient and modern, have entertained different opinions.

It is certain, that something must have existed from eternity; this is a self-evident truth: and it has been proved by conclusive evidence, that this self-existent must be an Intelligent Being. Whatever attribute belongs to his nature, it must be regarded as an essential perfection, and inseparable from his existence. Now, if it be conceded to the materialist, that matter by organization becomes capable of thought, it will not be affirmed, that it is necessarily intelligent. An infinitesimally small pro-

portion of that mass, with which we are acquainted, possesses organization; and a still smaller portion is capable of thought. If intelligence is the result of mere organization, and if there is no immaterial principle of thinking, still it must be allowed, that, as the organization is a property not inseparable from, or not inherent in, matter, thought, the effect, must belong to it, not as an essential, but as a contingent property. If organized matter can think, by virtue of mere organization, its power of thinking must be derived from Deity, being itself essentially devoid of intelligence. Its organization, as has been shewn, is to be attributed to a Designing Cause; the effect, therefore, of that organization must be ascribed to the same Cause. Now, the hypothesis of two eternal and self-existent beings, one essentially intelligent, the other senseless and impercipient, the one the sovereign agent, the other a passive instrument, is a supposition obviously irreconcileable with the notion of independence. If matter is indebted to Deity for its forms, its motions, and various modifications, we have reason to presume, that it depends on

Him for its existence also. It amounts, we apprehend, to a contradiction to suppose a self-existent being to be in any respect dependent on another, or under his control*. This argument alone is conclusive against the eternity of matter, and suffices to shew that there is no other self-existent Being, than the Eternal and Intelligent Architect of the universe.

But the hypothesis of two eternal and independent beings, is not only improbable in the extreme, but also gratuitous. It is an established rule in philosophizing, to admit no more causes, than suffice to account for the effect. If it could be shewn, that the wisdom and power, by which the presumed properties and operations of matter are regulated and governed, are inadequate to its production, there might be then reason to believe, that matter had no beginning. But until this be proved, we cannot, consistently with an acknowledged rule, admit two eternal causes; for, if one suffices to explain the

* This argument presumes, that the existence of an Intelligent First Cause has been proved.

phenomena, a plurality is inadmissible, and the hypothesis, which proposes it, is gratuitous and unnecessary.

To this rule the Atheist expresses his assent; but he contends, that nothing can account for the existence of matter, but the supposition of its eternity and self-existence. The doctrine of creation he pronounces to be a manifest impossibility. He ridicules it as one of those foolish absurdities, which nothing but the love of paradox could suggest, or consummate ignorance maintain. But we want argument, not assertion, reasoning and not ridicule. Why is creation pronounced to be impossible? Where is the contradiction in supposing, that there exists a power adequate to the production of matter? Is the doctrine to be rejected, because man possesses no such power, or because we are incapable of conceiving, how creation can be effected? Our conceptions surely, where contradictions are excluded, are not the standards of physical possibility. No dogma can be less consistent with the character of an enlightened mind, or the principles of a sound philosophy, than the

assumption, that "Man is the measure of all things."

But is it not, rejoins the Atheist, an incontrovertible maxim, *ex nihilo nihil fit?* And is not the doctrine of creation directly repugnant to this axiom? If this proposition be understood to mean, that for every effect there must be a cause, or that nothing can be produced by nothing, or for every production there must be a producer, the maxim is acknowledged to express a universal truth. But thus understood, it is evidently inapplicable to the subject in question. The existence of an Eternal, Powerful, and Intelligent Being, has been already proved; and in Him we find a cause sufficient to account for the existence of this globe, and all its productions. A celebrated writer* indeed, in a volume of Essays, to which we formerly adverted, affirmed it to be conceivable, that something should spring from nothing. Such a conception may be admitted in imagination; but by common reason it must be rejected. We may conceive some-

* See "Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion," published at Edinburgh 1751.

thing presenting itself to our senses, as in the exhibitions of a phantasmagoria, without any apparent cause; but reason teaches us, that there must be a cause. We do not assert, nor is our doctrine chargeable with the absurdity, that something can proceed from nothing, or that matter could start into existence by its own spontaneity; for this would imply, that a nonentity might be the cause of existence, or that, what has no being, might yet be the cause of its own being. But our hypothesis involves no such contradiction. We believe Deity to be the efficient cause of matter—its author, its creator. And we challenge the Atheist to prove, that there is any absurdity in supposing, that the same wisdom, and the same power, by which the universe is sustained, are incapable of giving that universe existence, as in form, so also in substance. We will not allow him to assume, as a self-evident truth, that what is *relatively*, is likewise *absolutely* impossible, or that no power can accomplish what man cannot effect, or of which he cannot conceive the means. Omnipotence, it is admitted, cannot reconcile contradictions, or achieve absolute im-

possibilities; but there is no absurdity or contradiction in believing that a power exists, capable of calling matter into being. Unable ourselves either to create, or to annihilate a single atom, we must be incapable of comprehending, by what means creation can be effected; but our ignorance of the mode is no argument for the impossibility of the fact. There is not a single phenomenon of nature, from the production of a drop of water, to the organization of man, which, antecedently to experience, we should deem possible. Is it not then extreme presumption to limit possibility by conceptions, confined to our narrow experience? The Sceptic admits, that we may conceive matter to be annihilated, why may it not also be conceived to be created * ?

* Cudworth institutes an argument, *a fortiori*, from the capacity of man to produce some things out of nothing pre-existing, as "new cogitations, new modifications of things corporeal", to the possibility of the creation of matter by an Omnipotent Being. But may it not be questioned, whether the human mind can produce new mental combinations, the elements of which did not previously exist? The existence of a creative power in a finite being, which may in all finite beings be an impos-

The Atheist, we are aware, contends, that action implies passion,—that, where there is passion, or suffering, there must be something acted upon; and that creation, therefore, in which is implied *action*, and no *passion*, there being no pre-existent subject to be acted upon, is an absurdity. This, in principle, is much the same with the preceding objection, presented in a different form. We certainly have no example of creation; but experience teaches us what is, and not what must or may be. There is something superlatively vain and arrogant in the assertion, as well as irrational in the belief, that no power can communicate existence, because human power is incapable of accomplishing it, or human wisdom of conceiving the means. There is also a palpable inconsistency in acknowledging the comparative insignificance of our habitation in the vast universe, and our limited mental perceptions, and yet asserting, that human conception is the measure of possibility, as if no higher intelligence could exist than ours. This con-

sibility, is not necessary to prove, that such a power may belong to a Being infinite in all his perfections.

sideration should repress all objections, which have no other foundation, than the ignorance, the presumption, or the arrogance of man. But to the argument of the Sceptic, as abstractly stated, we have a direct, and satisfactory answer. In opposition to his dogma, that *action necessarily implies passion*, we contend, that the only necessary correlate to *action*, as denoting either *the act of doing*, or *the thing done*, is *doer*, or *agent*. We deny his assumption to be a universal or metaphysical truth; if not such, his objection falls to the ground.

We believe then matter to have been created by Deity, 1st, because we perceive no contradiction in supposing, that a power is possible, capable of calling matter into existence. 2dly, If such power is possible, it must belong to an Eternal and Self-existent Being, to whose nature it is essential to unite in Himself every possible perfection. 3dly, If one cause suffices to account for a phenomenon, it is idle and unphilosophical to resort to more. 4thly, It implies, we conceive, a contradiction to suppose, that there can be two beings eternal, and, in respect to

existence, mutually independent, and yet the one subject to the government and control of the other. 5thly, Because the dogma of the Atheist, that *action* implies *passion*, is not a metaphysical truth, the necessary correlate of *action* being *agent*, and not *passion* *.

* The argument drawn from the immateriality of the human soul, the Materialist will not admit; but, if the mind of man be an immaterial principle, it must have been created; and if any substance has been created, the material universe may have been created.

ON THE

ATTRIBUTES OF DEITY.

CHAPTER III.

SECTION I.

On the Unity of the Divine Nature.

"There is one God; and none other, but He."

It has been proved, by various appeals to the phenomena of nature, that Intelligence must have presided at the formation of our system; and that no chance, no blind necessity, could have produced the order, the beauty, and the utility, visible around us. The question now to be considered is the following. Is there only one Intelligent and Supreme Author of all things? Or is there a plurality of self-existent intelligent beings?

In order to prove, that there is only one God, Dr. Clarke argues thus:—"To suppose two or more different natures, ex-

isting of themselves, necessarily and independently on each other, implies this plain contradiction, that, each of them being independent from the other, they may either of them be supposed to exist alone, so that it will be no contradiction to suppose the other not to exist, and, consequently, neither of them will be necessarily existing." It must excite some surprise, that the fallacy of this argument should have escaped the penetration and sagacity of this profound metaphysician. Surely there is a palpable contradiction in supposing a self-existent being not to exist. The very notion, that either of two beings necessarily existent, can cease to exist, involves an absurdity. It implies, that necessity and contingency, two contrarieties, may be united in one and the same individual. That we can imagine the non-existence of either, is true; nay, we can conceive the non-existence of both. Imagination can easily create, or annihilate. But reason teaches us, that it is impossible for that not to be, which yet must be. If A exist by the necessity of its own nature, and cannot but exist, and if B, in like manner, be necessarily existent, it is

self-evident, that both must exist. What reason does Dr. Clarke urge for denying a truth, thus intuitively certain? "Each," he says, "being independent from the other, either may be supposed to exist alone; so that it will be no contradiction to suppose the other not to exist." This is truly a singular argument. It is wonderful, that this acute and profound metaphysician did not perceive, that the very reason, which he offers in favour of his conclusion, is directly opposed to it; and that he unwittingly impugns the doctrine, which he endeavours to establish. Surely the mutual independence of two beings may furnish an argument for the co-existence of both, but not for the non-existence of either. What is dependent for its being on something external to itself, may perish; what is independent, and necessarily existent, must be eternal. If Dr. Clarke had said, that, if a being be supposed to be necessarily existent, he cannot be supposed not to exist, or to have only a contingent existence, he would have advanced a proposition more consonant with truth; but to assign the independence of a being, as a

reason for his possible or real non-existence, is of all fallacies one of the most palpable. Independent and self-existent are mutually convertible terms.

The invalidity of his argument induced the late celebrated Lord Kames to address a letter to the learned divine on this subject, in which he says, "I see no necessity for more than one Deity; but does it hence follow, that there possibly can be no more? Here lies my difficulty, which, I am vexed, your argument has not brought me over." Dr. Clarke replies,—"If we see no necessity for more than one Deity, (that is, if one Being sufficiently answers for that necessity, by which I am obliged to allow some one being, at least, to be necessary,) it doth from thence follow, that there can possibly be no more; because, what being can possibly be conceived not to be necessary, cannot possibly be necessary, the idea of necessity effectually excluding all possibility of being so much as conceived not to be necessary. He that conceives the equality of the three angles of a triangle not to be necessary, does not in truth conceive any such thing; but only carelessly

affirms a contradiction, of which no man can possibly have any conception." Let us examine this argument. "If we see no necessity for more than one Deity, it does from thence follow, that there can possibly be no more." This is indeed an extraordinary consequence. Is existence dependent on our perception? We see no necessity for more than one artisan to construct a clock; does it thence follow, that there can possibly be no more? Only one Creator is necessary to produce the universe. Is it therefore infallibly certain, that there were no more than one Being engaged in the work of creation? Because one must be, how does it appear, that more cannot be? Or how is the existence of more necessarily excluded? Are we justified in arguing from the necessity of one to the impossibility of others? Certainly not. But let us hear the author's reason. "Because what being can possibly be conceived not to be necessary, cannot possibly be necessary, the idea of necessity effectually excluding all possibility of being so much as conceived not to be necessary." Necessary? In what sense? Necessary

to the production of the universe? Or necessary in its own nature? This important distinction, the author has in his argument entirely confounded. In his premises he uses the term *necessary* in a causal and relative sense, implying the necessity of some self-existent being to the creation of the world; and in his conclusion he varies its meaning, employing it to denote, *existing by the necessity of its own nature*, thus rendering his reasoning palpably sophistical. A Polytheist may not contend for the necessity of more than one Creator; but he may maintain, that the necessity for one cannot exclude the possible existence of more. He will say with Dr. Clarke, that a self-existent Being must be allowed as necessary, to account for the origin of the universe; and perhaps admit, "that what being can possibly be conceived not to be necessary," for the creation of nature, "cannot possibly be necessary" for that purpose; but he may contend, that, though another being be not necessary for the production of the world, another may exist by the necessity of his own nature; and that these two necessities, as essentially dif-

ferent, should be carefully distinguished. He may question also, whether conception, as an imaginative power, furnishes any rule for judging of the possibility of either absolute or relative,—of either independent or derived, existence, inasmuch as, whatever we imagine to exist, we may also imagine not to exist *.

* "It will still be possible", says Hume, "for us at any time, to conceive the non-existence of what we formerly conceived to exist; nor can the mind ever lie under the necessity of supposing any object to remain always in being, in the same manner, as we lie under the necessity of always conceiving twice two to be four." In this opinion we concur; but he errs, when he adds the observation that "the words *necessary existence* have no meaning, or, which is the same thing, have none, that is consistent." If the term *necessary* is confined to the immutable relations of our notions or ideas, it is unquestionably true, that necessity cannot be predicated of any physical phenomena. But common usage has assigned to this term a more extensive signification, it being often employed, even by Mr. Hume himself, to denote a physical necessity, or that, by which a physical cause is conjoined with its effect. Did Mr. Hume contend, that the elements of the universe existed from eternity? By what term then would he characterise this mode of existence? Would he name it contingent? This would be directly repugnant to the assumed hypothesis of its eternity. Eternal existence, and contingent existence, are utterly irreconcileable. If he say, that it

Thus it appears that the argument is either irrelevant, or illogical. If the term *necessary* imply throughout a causal, or, as it may be termed, a relative necessity, the reasoning does not affect the question; if it means first a causal or relative, and then varies to the signification of an absolute necessity, the argument is evidently a gross paralogism. It may, if not more clearly, be more speciously, stated in the following terms:—

I. One self-existent Being is necessary to the production of the universe.

II. Another is not necessary, and therefore another may not exist.

III. And, if he may not exist, he cannot be a necessary Being, for every necessary Being must exist.

IV. Therefore there is only one self-existent and necessary Being.

existed by the necessity of its own nature, he must retract his assertion, that *necessary existence* has no meaning. Mr. Hume's object may have been to exclude the notion of necessary existence as belonging to Deity; if so, it escaped his sagacity to perceive, that it would be equally true, that the materials of the universe did not necessarily exist.

The argument seems conclusive; but let us briefly again examine it, in this form.

The first proposition is admitted as self evident. The assumption in the second being conceded, the inference follows, that there *may be* no other, than one self-existent being. The third is either irrelevant, or absurd. If the term necessary is confined to its relative and causal acceptation, the proposition is true; but, in this sense, the argument does not touch the question. And if we take the second and third propositions in connexion, we find the argument and the conclusion mutually interchanged, the premises in the one, becoming the conclusion in the other, and conversely. If the term *necessary*, in the third proposition, refer not to relative or causal, but to absolute, existence, the supposition with which it sets out, involves a contradiction —a manifest impossibility; for a necessary being, that is, one existing, by the necessity of his own nature, cannot but exist. It supposes another necessary or self-existent being as possibly not existing, not being necessary to the production of the

universe; and yet, if existing, it represents him as not self-existent, or existing by the necessity of his own nature, which is a contradiction. It is stated thus; *if it is possible for another self-existent being not to exist, he cannot be a self-existent being.* This is a palpable absurdity. If an impossibility were possible, the conclusion would be just. But, it is said, the possibility of his non-existence implies, that he is not necessary. Not necessary to the production of the universe, certainly; and it is from the absence of this necessity, that the possibility of his non-existence is inferred. But does not the possibility of non-existence imply the possibility of existence? and if a self-existent being exists, he exists by the necessity of his own nature. From the possibility that he may not exist at all, it would be a contradiction to conclude, that, if a necessarily existing being does exist, he is not a necessarily existent being. If we vary the expression, and say, if there be not another necessary being, he cannot be a necessary being, the sophism is palpable. The error will appear equally evident, if for

the pronominal representative, we substitute the name of the subject, thus: "one self-existent being was necessary to the production of the universe; another self-existent being was not necessary for that purpose, and therefore may not exist. And if another self-existent and necessary being may not exist, another self-existent and necessary being cannot be a self-existent and necessary being: that is, he cannot be, what he is." In this absurdity the argument terminates. In every view it is evidently fallacious. From the necessity of one Eternal Being to account for the universe, it most illogically concludes, that there can be no other being existing by the necessity of his own nature. And from the possibility of another not existing, it either falsely infers its impossibility; or, absurdly, that, if he does exist, he cannot be what he is, and must be.

The error of the author evidently originates in confounding causal, or relative, with absolute and inherent necessity, or that, which is necessary to the creation of the universe, with that, which is necessary

by its own nature. The high authority, by which this fallacy is supported has induced us to expose it at greater length, than the metaphysical reader may think it required, or may, perhaps, be disposed to excuse.

The abstract argument for the Divine unity, as stated by Wollaston, and partly adopted by Hartley, proceeds thus. If there existed two infinite beings, they must either be of the *same nature*, or of *a contrary nature*, or of *natures merely different*. Two infinite and absolutely perfect beings, having the same attributes, would, as Hartley expresses it, "in our idea coalesce"; or, according to Wollaston, would be "but the *same* or *one*," both being infinite. But is it possible to apprehend any two beings under the notion of one? they either cannot exist, or they must be considered as numerically different. It is true, that a distinction must be made between two infinite and absolutely perfect beings, and two mutually similar finite beings, existing in different parts of space, the latter of whom must be numerically different, though

generically the same. But, were we capable of conceiving two infinite and absolutely perfect Beings of the same nature, it seems impossible to apprehend them under the notion of one. Either both cannot exist, or they must be conceived as two. The shortest and most satisfactory answer to the former alternative is, that the supposition, as explaining nothing, is useless and nugatory. If the two infinite Beings are of *mutually opposite or contrary natures*, one continually oppugning the other, no effect whatever could follow from their existence. If they were *merely different*, then, as being disparates, there must exist some generic and superior Being; and this notion would involve a contradiction. It is evident then, that the first supposition of two infinite beings of the same nature, is an idle hypothesis; the second, of two infinite beings of contrary natures, involving neutrality of action, accounts for nothing, and is contradicted by existing phenomena; the third involves a contradiction, implying, that there are two infinite beings, and one superior to both. The conclusion, therefore is, that there is only one infinite

and independent Being. This argument seems decisive of the question *.

* In one of the commentaries of the "Desatir," a Persian work, affirmed by its translator Mulla Firuz Bin Kaus, a man of reputed learning and sound judgment, to be a work of high antiquity, the only existing copy of which was accidentally discovered a few years ago, we have the following metaphysical argument in favour of the Divine Unity. The text is, "There are not two self-existents." The commentary, as translated, proceeds thus: "If there were two necessarily existent Beings, each possessing the essential qualities of the other, then their sense of diversity, in respect to each other, must be owing to the intervention of something external to their natures, so far as regards their identity and consciousness of diversity. But every thing dependent belongs to the class of contingent existences." Here is assumed, as the basis of the argument, what, we apprehend, cannot be conceded. May not a person have the feeling of self-identity, and also that he is not the same with another, though precisely similar to himself, without the intervention of a third individual? How is this intervention proved to be necessary? And, if the position assumed were granted, by what principle does it follow, that, because the intervention of a third person is necessary to the consciousness of self-identity in each, and of their diversity from each other, their existence depends on that individual? The argument seems to be wholly fallacious. Again, it is written in the respected volume, the Jawedan Kherid, that, "if there be two necessarily existents, it is necessary, that each of them should be omnipotent over all possible existences; for defect of power is not a quality of the Godhead. Hence, as often as the one de-

But the unity of the Deity, or the existence of only one eternal and independent Being, is clearly deducible also from the constitution of nature. If one self-existent Being is sufficient to account for the production of the universe, to suppose a plurality is a needless hypothesis. To multiply causes beyond the necessity indicated in the effect, is repugnant to an established principle in philosophy, and also irreconcileable to the simplicity of nature, in which

sires one thing, and the other desires the contrary, if it be supposed that the wish of both is effected, then it follows, that the opposite wishes of both are frustrated; and if the wish of one be superior, the other must be inferior in power; and want of power cannot appertain to the Godhead." The argument, as here offered in favour of the Divine Unity, is conclusive against the existence of two omnipotent and intelligent beings, possessing mutually repugnant attributes; and a mode of reasoning very similar to this has been successfully employed by theologians in modern times, in refutation of the doctrine of Manicheism.

The greater part of the commentary displays considerable subtlety and refinement in metaphysical science, and in many places bears a remarkable resemblance to the reasoning of several ancient, as well as modern metaphysicians. This coincidence is particularly striking, in the arguments, which have been adduced by philosophers, in favour of the immortality of the soul.

we find nothing superfluous, but, on the contrary, the most extraordinary results issuing from the simplest means. If we suppose more than one Deity, though one is sufficient, we may suppose twenty, or any indefinite number. Where are we to stop?

If we perceive a uniformity of design pervading the universe, and discover nothing in the system, but what the existence of one Powerful and Intelligent Cause is capable of accounting for, we have reason to conclude, that only one exists, and to refer the whole to one and the same Author. Now, in examining the phenomena of nature, we observe, in the constitution of the physical and moral world, a striking uniformity of design. We perceive the same laws everywhere obtaining, as far as our researches extend; and the same effects universally following the same causes. If we survey the systematic and astonishing provision, for the propagation and preservation of all organic beings, how the means provided for these purposes, though various in different organisms, yet all manifest one and the same design, and all concur, in their respective circumstances, to

the accomplishment of one and the same end, the conclusion, that they are the ordinations of only one Intelligent Cause, forces itself on our conviction. If we direct our attention to the constitution of our own frame, and observe the wonderful harmony of the parts, each performing its own function, and all contributing to one common end, it is impossible to believe it to be the production of more than one Being. "The statue of Laocoon," says Hume, "as we learn from Pliny, was the work of three artists. But it is certain, that were we not told so, we should never have imagined, that a groupe of figures cut from one stone, and united in one plan, was not the work and contrivance of one statuary."* So natural is it for us to infer unity of agent from unity of design, and unity in execution.

* Mr. Hume may have insidiously intended, by this observation, to throw some doubt on the doctrine of the Divine Unity. But, while he admits, that the inference of one statuary would be the conclusion, which every man would irresistibly be led to draw, our argument is complete. It claims not the force of demonstrative certainty; but of the highest moral probability. With this, every rational man will be satisfied.

If we survey the moral and intellectual constitution of our nature, we discover the same faculties and powers, the same feelings, the same passions and affections, common to the species, and all severally subject to the same laws. The same grand phenomenon of gravitation extends through the universe; the same principles of mechanical, chemical, moral, and intellectual agency, operate in every region of the globe; and each cause is discovered to produce uniformly, in the same circumstances, the same result. "All things in the universe", acknowledges Mr. Hume, "are evidently of a piece; every thing is adjusted to every thing; one design prevails throughout*; and this uniformity

* The inconsistency of Mr. Hume will not here escape the observation of the attentive reader. The author contends, that we are not warranted to infer design, unless we know, by information or experience, that the thing done, was the thing intended; and, assuming this position, he denies, that the works of nature manifest design. How does he reconcile this negation with the acknowledgement, that "one design prevails throughout." Can there be a more palpable contradiction? Does not design imply intelligence?

leads the mind to acknowledge one author, because the conception of different authors, without any distinction of attributes or operations, serves only to give perplexity to the imagination, without bestowing any satisfaction on the understanding."*

But, while he admits, that the constitution of the physical universe displays uniformity of design, he draws a very different conclusion from a view of the moral and intellectual world. "When we trace", says he, "the footsteps of invisible power, in the various and contrary events of human life, we are necessarily led into Polytheism, and to the acknowledgement of several limited and imperfect deities. Storms and tempests ruin what is nourished by the sun; the sun destroys what is formed by the moisture of dews and rain. War may be favourable to a nation, whom inclemency of seasons afflicts with famine" .... He concludes: "In short, the conduct of events, or what we call the plan of a particular Providence, is so full of variety and uncertainty, that, if we suppose it imme-

* "Natural History of Religion."

diately ordered by any intelligent beings, we must acknowledge a contrariety in their designs and intentions."

It requires no deep research into the phenomena of the material universe, nor any profound acquaintance with the condition of human life, to satisfy any reflecting mind, that a close and striking analogy subsists between the economy of the physical, and that of the moral and intellectual world. If the philosopher, therefore, saw sufficient reason, for referring the former to one Intelligent Cause, there is equal ground for ascribing the latter also to one and the same Author. Each is distinguished by occasional anomalies; each is characterized by a mixture of good and evil; and in each is observable a preponderance of order, harmony, and the means of happiness.

In the physical world are established general laws, operating with uniform regularity, and, in a vast majority of instances, productive of beneficial effects. Even the untoward collisions, which occasionally interrupt the general harmony, are equally the results of the same fixed and determi-

nate laws, as the wonted and orderly course of nature. But, though their obvious purpose, and general tendency, be to effect good, exceptions occur, in which they are productive of evil. The air which we breathe, and to whose salutary influence we are indebted for life, and a thousand blessings, becomes occasionally a noxious element, and taints us with its pestilential blasts. Agitated sometimes into a whirlwind, or a hurricane, it sweeps the ground, and ravages our fields. The electric fluid, one of the prime agents in physical nature, and probably the great spring of vegetable and animal life, changes, occasionally, its imperceptible influence into the peal of thunder, and the lightning's flash. The sun scorches our harvests, and the rain deluges our lands. The volcano throws forth its liquid fire, and the earthquake rocks our cities. Here we perceive causes, whose usual operation is useful and salutary, producing effects, which we contemplate with grief, and deprecate with terror.

Precisely analogous to this physical constitution, is the economy of nature, in the

moral and intellectual world. Every passion, every feeling, every faculty, with which we are endowed, is obedient to general laws, and is evidently granted for the sustentation, the happiness, and the improvement of our being. Their beneficial tendency, and salutary effects, are as unquestionable as the air of heaven, or the light of the sun. But, like physical blessings, they are not unaccompanied with evil. Reason, the light to truth, and the guide to virtue, is liable to error; memory sometimes disappoints and deceives us; imagination becomes distempered, and fills us with wild or painful delusions. Passions, inspired for necessary purposes, and in themselves innocent and useful, acquire undue ascendancy, and are directed to improper objects. Ambition, the great stimulus to emulation and excellence, aims at inordinate power, and indulges in blood. Hope swells into transport, and fear sinks into despair. Anger generates resentment, and resentment settles into revenge. Joy, like a sunbeam, now gladdens the countenance; now again melancholy, like the shadowing cloud, darkens the brow. The

scene of human life, as the varying phenomena of the material universe, is mixed and chequered. Each is constituted by a combination of opposite qualities, and each proceeds by a succession of contrarieties. The *discordia concors* is observable in both. The economy of each has a universal tendency to good, and each indicates one and the same Designing Cause. If we had no other proof of unity of design, than the structure of our own frame, it would alone furnish conclusive evidence, that physical and moral nature are the production of one cause. The striking subserviency of body to mind, and the aptitude of the organs of the one, to execute the purposes of the other, instantaneously obedient to its volitions, demonstrate one Intelligent Author.

Such being the striking analogy between the economy of the physical, and that of the moral world, each exhibiting a mixture of contrarieties, and occasional irregularities, productive, however, of a great preponderance of good, if the physical world be allowed to indicate one Author, with no consistency can it be denied, that the mo-

ral world proceeded from one and the same Cause.

From the varieties and vicissitudes, the commixture of pains and pleasures in the condition of human life, Hume would infer a plurality of deities; and the Manichees concluded the existence of two eternal and conflicting powers—a good and an evil spirit. Whether Mr. Hume inadvertently erred, when he delivered his opinion on this subject, or whether, with an insidious intention, he admitted, that the works of physical nature all indicate one and the same Author, confident, that the view, which he should afterwards present of human life, would subvert the conviction, which he might have previously produced in the mind of his reader, we shall not presume to determine. One thing, however, is evident, namely, that, in examining the economy of the moral world, he has ranked some in the class of moral evils, which are evidently purely physical. He confesses, that the natural world clearly exhibits unity of design. "Every thing", he acknowledges, "is adjusted to every thing." From a survey of the moral world, abounding, as

he asserts, in irregularities and evils, he; on the contrary, infers a plurality of deities; and among these evils he ranks "storms and tempests," drought and famine, thus darkening the picture of moral nature, by charging it with anomalies and perturbations, which unquestionably belong to the physical world. With what propriety can earthquakes and volcanos, storms or tempests, famine and pestilence, be numbered amongst moral evils? These occasional irregularities constitute important features in the economy of the physical system, and resemble those commotions, which fiery and malignant passions engender in the moral world. Mr. Hume, by representing the economy of the moral, as dissimilar to that of the physical world, would lead us to refer them to different causes. The analogy, however, is close and striking; hence, therefore, we conclude, that, if the physical universe, in which "all things are evidently of a piece, every thing is adjusted to every thing, and one design prevails throughout," indicates one Deity, the moral world equally evinces one and the same Author.

The Manichean doctrine, of two eternal and mutually repugnant principles, seems morally impossible. To suppose an eternal and infinite being, possessing unlimited wisdom and power, whose nature is purely malevolent, is to suppose the co-existence of two irreconcileable contrarieties. Malignity, implying ignorance and weakness, cannot possibly co-exist with the attributes of infinite power, and infinite wisdom. This objection alone appears fatal to the hypothesis.

Nor is the hypothesis more defensible on the supposition, that the two eternal beings do not possess infinite wisdom and infinite power. If such could without absurdity be supposed to exist, they must either possess these attributes in an equal degree, or one must be superior to the other. If we take the former alternative, the energies of both, engaged in eternal conflict, must be mutually neutralized. Every effort of the one to effect good or evil, must be instantly counteracted by the opposition of the other. Like two equal contending weights, neither could preponderate. Under the conflicting agencies of two such be-

ings, there could exist neither good nor evil. If we take the other alternative, and suppose the superiority of either, it is evident, that the inferior must ultimately yield, and the struggle for the mastery terminate in the established ascendancy of his more sagacious and powerful opponent. The Manichean doctrine, therefore, seems untenable; and our conclusion must be, that there is only one God.

SECTION II.

On the Infinity of the Divine Being.

FROM a belief in the existence of Deity, the mind is irresistibly led to a conviction of His infinity. In the preceding pages, though not directly given to the present subject, we have had occasion to contemplate the most astonishing proofs of His wisdom, His power, and His benevolence. We perceive these attributes most impressively displayed in the constitution and economy of nature, in our lower world, extending through myriads of animated beings. We direct our view to the planetary system, and there we

behold the arrangements of His wisdom, and the stupendous effects of His power. We extend our contemplation to the thousands and thousands of orbs, floating far beyond these in the immensity of space, at distances immeasurable, and scarcely discernible by human eye. The telescope enlarges the field, and presents us with thousands and tens of thousands more, teaching us to infer, that it is only because our powers of vision are limited, that we are unable to penetrate further into the boundless regions of the universe. The wisdom and power by which these myriads of worlds exist, are, in relation to us, infinite and incomprehensible. Hence it is, that conceiving no limit to their extent, the notion of absolute infinity, both in the effect and the cause, forces itself irresistibly on our conviction. We arrive at the same conclusion by a short and simple process of reasoning.

To be infinite is to have no limits. Of infinity no finite understanding can form a direct and adequate conception. The term, when applied to an intelligent and powerful Being, may be understood, as

implying, that he possesses every possible excellence, in the highest possible degree. This character must belong to Deity, for in His nature all possibilities of excellence must be realities. If He possess not any possible perfection, there is no other being who can possess it, or from whom He can derive it: the possibility therefore becomes an impossibility, which is a contradiction.

Or thus:—If there were any thing, by which the nature and energies of the Divine Being could be restricted or limited, it must be either something in Himself, or something external. The latter alternative is impossible. It is excluded by his self-existence and independence. It cannot be in Himself, for this would imply either a positive defect, or a contrariety of attributes: but such a notion as the former would involve the contradiction, that perfection is possible, and yet impossible; and a mutual repugnancy of attributes, in any degree whatever, would be an argument of weakness, if not of absolute impotency.

The infinitude of the Divine Being, indeed, seems to follow as a necessary consequence of his eternity and self-existence.

To suppose a Being infinite in duration, or in any attribute whatever, and yet finite in others, is a hypothesis which the mind intuitively rejects. It is with reason, then, that we believe the Divine nature to be infinite. Apprehending nothing by which it can be limited but contradictions, we are led to attribute infinity to Deity, as we ascribe this quality to space.

The arguments of Spinoza, adduced to prove the infinite perfections of his Divinity, are applicable to the question here:— "I°. Id esse æternum; si enim determinata duratio ei attribueretur, Ens istud, extra determinatam durationem, ut non existens, vel ut necessariam non involvens existentiam, conciperetur, quod definitioni suæ repugnat. II°. Id simplex, non vero ex partibus compositum esse. Partes namque componentes naturâ et cognitione priores sint oportet, quàm id, quod compositum est; quod in eo, quod suâ naturâ æternum est, locum non habet. III°. Id non determinatum, sed solum infinitum posse concipi. Quippe si istius Entis natura determinata esset, et etiam determinata conciperetur, illa natura extra eos terminos, ut

non existens, conciperetur, quod cum definitione sua quoque pugnat. IV°. Id indivisibile esse. Si enim esset divisibile, in partes vel ejusdem, vel diversæ naturæ, dividi posset; si hoc, destrui, et ita non existere possit, quod definitioni adversum est: Et si illud, pars quælibet necessariam per se existentiam includeret, et hoc pacto unum sine alio existere, et per consequens concipi; et propterea illa Natura, ut finita, comprehendi posset, quod, per antecedens, definitioni adversatur. Hinc videre est, quod, si ejusmodi Enti aliquam velimus ascribere imperfectionem, statim in contradictionem incidamus. Nam, sive imperfectio, quam tali vellemus affingere Naturæ, in quodam defectu, aut terminis quibusdam, quos istiusmodi Naturæ possideret, vel in aliqua mutatione quam virium defectu a causis externis pati posset, sita esset; eo semper redigemur, eam Naturam, quæ necessariam involvit existentiam, non existere, vel haud necessario existere, et idcirco concludo V°. Id omne, quod necessariam includit existentiam, nullam in se habere posse imperfectionem, sed meram debere exprimere perfectionem." Ep. 40.

These arguments may be thus briefly expressed: 1st, The Deity must be eternal; for, if His duration were limited, it would follow, that a time was, when He did not exist; or would be, when He would cease to exist; but this is irreconcileable with necessary existence. 2dly, Simple: for if composed of parts, these parts must have existed prior to His existence; but this would be a contradiction to necessary existence. 3dly, Infinite: for, if His being were limited by time or space, he might be apprehended as not existing beyond a certain time and space; but this also would be repugnant to the notion of necessary existence. 4thly, Indivisible: for if divisible, he might be destructible, and therefore not necessary; but this would be a contradiction. Hence it is evident, that we cannot impute to him any imperfection, without running into contradiction; whence we conclude, that a necessarily existent Being can have no imperfection, and must be infinite, or absolutely perfect, in all his attributes.

SECTION III.

On the Immateriality of the Divine Being.

FROM the unity and infinity of the Deity, we proceed to consider His immateriality. The term immaterial has merely a negative import, expressing, not what the subject is, but what it is not. Leibnitz, indeed, endeavoured to render the notion affirmative; but his attempt was more ingenious than successful. Now, matter is made up of parts. It is discerptible and changeable, subject to an endless variety of modifications. Whatever is composed of parts, must have existed in parts, before it became a whole. If the Deity, then, were material, the absurdity would follow, that the Original of all existence was not the first of all beings. This argument is alone conclusive.

Again, whatever is discerptible is changeable, and whatever is changeable is imperfect. This position is self-evident*. But, as we cannot suppose im-

* See Vol. I. p. 308.

perfection to be the character of the One Self-existent and Infinite Being, without involving the contradiction, that what is possible is yet impossible, it follows, that mutability cannot be the character of the Divine nature; the Deity, therefore, must be immaterial *.

In proof of the immateriality of the Supreme Being, Mr. Locke conclusively argues thus: If matter were the Eternal Being, sense, perception, and thought, could never have originated. For the particles of matter must be essentially either thinking, or unthinking. If we take the former alternative, then there are as many eternal thinking beings, as there are

* Pistorius observes, that the notions of self-existence, and necessary existence, are inseparably connected with our notion of immutability. Were this observation just, it would be impossible to account for the general adoption of the hypothesis, by the major part of the ancient philosophers, that matter is self-existent. If these notions were necessarily connected, the mutability of matter must have compelled them to conclude against its eternity. But it seems undeniable, that our notion of self-existence, or necessary existence, as the attribute of the only Eternal and Intelligent Being, is inseparably connected with our notion of absolute perfection, and therefore with a conviction of His immutability.

atoms, and so an infinity of gods. This, he observes, will not be asserted. If we take the latter alternative, that the particles of matter are essentially impercipient and incogitative, then it is as absurd to suppose, that a cogitative being can be made out of incogitative particles, as that an extended being can be made out of unextended particles. The Eternal Being, therefore, must be an Intelligent Being. But He cannot be at the same time corporeal; for this would involve the same absurdity. It would be to suppose, the Eternal Being to be composed of particles of matter, each of which is unintelligent, and to ascribe all knowledge to the juxtaposition of these particles. The absurdity of this position is evident, and the conclusion of immateriality irresistibly follows.

Again, the hypothesis that the Divine Being is corporeal, involves the contradiction that He is at once finite and infinite. Spinoza was aware of this consequence, and, denying the existence of a vacuum, maintained the infinitude of the universe,

and this universe to be God. Body is limited, occupying only a certain portion of space; but the Divine nature is infinite; it must therefore be incorporeal. Our inability to form an image, or a conception of a being purely immaterial, furnishes no argument against its existence. We may not be able to conceive, or comprehend, what a substance may be, though we may know certainly, what it is not, and what it cannot be. A man without the sense of hearing has no idea of sound, nor a blind man any conception of colour, though each may be assured, that these ideas have existence, and that sound and colour have no resemblance to taste or smell. We conclude, then, the Deity to be immaterial; 1st, because the contrary hypothesis involves the absurdity, that the First of all beings was posterior in existence to other beings. 2dly, Mutability is the character of matter; but mutability, implying imperfection, cannot be the attribute of an Infinite and Intelligent Being, in whom all perfections must centre. 3dly, Because intellect cannot originate in senseless atoms,

4thly, Because the hypothesis involves the contradiction, that the Deity is at once finite and infinite.

SECTION IV.

The Deity is a Being infinitely wise and powerful.

When it is attempted, by the Theist, to demonstrate the existence of Deity, by arguments purely metaphysical, or, as they have been improperly termed, arguments *a priori*, then, in order to investigate His attributes, or to prove His power, His wisdom, and His benevolence, it becomes necessary for him to refer to the phenomena of nature. *We* have relied entirely on the argument *a posteriori*, not only as the more intelligible, but as much the more conclusive. Hence our attention was necessarily directed to the phenomena of the universe, but particularly of our globe, as exhibiting facts, illustrative of His power, His wisdom, and His goodness. These illustrations supersede the necessity of dilating now on the evidence, which nature furnishes, that the Deity is a powerful, a wise, and a good

Being. The importance however of the subject will justify us in offering a few observations, more directly in evidence of these attributes. Of the insuperable difficulties, which the subject involves, we are fully aware; and, though it will appear from our enquiry, that every attempt to reconcile the existence of evil with the infinitude of the Divine perfections, has failed, and ever must prove to be unsuccessful, we confidently affirm, that no proposition is more demonstrable, no truth more certain, than that the Deity is infinitely powerful, wise, and good.

Of all the attributes of the Divine Being, none strikes us so forcibly, as His inconceivable power. Whether we contemplate the universe, as extended through the immensity of space, or confine our views to our own planetary system, the power of the Creator and Preserver of the whole awakens our astonishment, and fills the soul with the most profound emotions of awe and reverence. This diurnal sphere, on which we live, would alone evince the power of its Almighty Maker. When we consider its magnitude, its daily rotation,

its annual revolution, the rapidity of its course, and reflect, how vast must be the power to move this single mass, we are lost in amazement, and humbled under a deep sense of our own weakness. It was calculated by a late astronomer, that, with a lever, whose *fulcrum* were 6000 miles from the earth's centre, and with a moving power, equal to 200 lbs. in weight, or the power of an ordinary man, and in velocity equal to a cannon ball, placed at the immense distance of 12,000000,000000,000000,000000, or twelve quadrillions of miles, it would require 27,000000,000000, that is, twenty-seven billions of years, to move the earth one inch. How vain would be the united force of all the human beings that now people the earth, to produce even this effect! Yet our globe rushes onward in its course, at the rate of 1000 miles a minute. How stupendous is the power of the Creator! How comparatively weak and insignificant is the creature man!

But what is our earth to the planet Saturn, which is more than 1000 times bigger than this sphere of ours? What

is it to the sun, nearly a million of times greater? What is it to the whole planetary and cometary systems? only one of 500 masses. What is the planetary system itself? It is nothing, when compared to the universe,—nothing to the thousands and thousands of systems, each enlightened by its star, or sun, extending through the immensity of space. From the nearest of these stars, or suns, our distance is not less than 37,000000,000000, or thirty-seven billions of miles; and when we reflect, that luminous bodies are discoverable by the telescope, whose light, if we may credit the calculations of an eminent astronomer, has been nearly two millions of years * in reaching our globe, though moving at the rate of more than ten millions of miles in a minute; what a conception does this give us of the universe! How stupendous and inconceivable is the power, which moves and regulates the whole!

But without receiving as facts conclusions from phenomena, which some may be inclined to doubt, the Omnipotence of

* Philosophical Transactions, 1801. Vince's Sermons.

Deity is one of those truths, which a contemplation of the heavens most forcibly impresses. It is true, that man can perceive only finite effects, and, from finite effects, we must not conclude infinite power; but, when we consider that we see only a part of the immense universe, and reflect that when the eye, aided by the art of the optician, has travelled through immensurable space, and finds no limit, if we do not conclude, that creation is absolutely boundless, which seems to be a natural conclusion, we must at least feel, that the power, by which thousands and thousands of orbs, in number and magnitude exceeding all conception, were created, are moved, and are preserved, is, in respect to us, incomprehensible and infinite! Here we might rest. But that the Divine Power is not relatively only, but absolutely infinite, is a clear and incontrovertible metaphysical truth. It is a necessary and irresistible inference from His eternity*. The notion of a limited power in an eternal, self-existent, and independent Being is absurd.

* See Vol. I. page 480.

Knowledge displayed in the accomplishment of useful purposes is denominated wisdom. Confined merely to intellectual attainments, it may, and sometimes does, exist, unaccompanied with this, its most valuable associate; but wisdom, which is the application of that acquaintance to useful purposes, cannot exist without knowledge. Sufficient evidence has been adduced to prove, not only the intelligence, but also the wisdom of the Deity. And, as we cannot assign bounds to the universe, nor have reason to suppose, that this intelligence is confined to a part of the creation, we must conclude, that the knowledge of the Deity is unlimited. He, from whom every law derives its agency, and every cause its efficacy; He who gave existence to every being, with every property, which it possesses, must be acquainted with every event which takes place in His own universe. To believe otherwise, indeed, would be to degrade the Author of nature below the level of man. The meanest human artisan, in adapting means to an end, knows, how the various parts of his machine will act, and

foresees the final result. A self-existent and Eternal Intelligent Being, with finite power, and finite knowledge, is a conception, which the mind spontaneously rejects. As we shall have occasion afterwards to revert to this subject, we shall, with these few observations, dismiss it for the present.

Resistless power, viewed abstractedly from every other attribute, is an object of terror. Even, when combined with knowledge, which, in human minds, is generally associated with virtue, it is calculated to excite some degree of apprehension and dread. To be divested of its terrors, it must be combined with benevolence. Conjoined with this attribute, and directed in its energies by consummate wisdom, it forms a character, on which we delight to dwell, and on which we repose with complacency and confidence.

SECTION V.

On the Goodness of Deity.

THE attribute of benevolence, as belonging to the Divine nature, and to us the

most interesting, rests on evidence, too obvious to be overlooked, and too forcible to be resisted. It seems to follow, indeed, as a necessary deduction from the very existence of the Divine Being; for malevolence is irreconcileable with self-existence and independence. But the constitution of our system affords direct and incontestable proofs of the goodness of its Author—proofs multiplied beyond number, but, by reason of our familiarity with them, too little regarded. Some of these we shall now proceed to state.

Let us first consider, for a moment, what this system would have been, if the Deity were a Being purely malevolent. On this supposition, man, and the whole sentient creation, must have been subject to perpetual suffering. The sources of our enjoyment would have been sources of misery. Our senses, external and internal, all our physical and intellectual powers, would have been the ceaseless and fruitful springs of unmixed pain and wretchedness. Let any person consider the diseases and aches, to which the human body is liable; let him reflect, that the smallest derange-

ment of the animal functions, occasions suffering; let him consider the numerous nerves and muscles, the sinews, the bones, the lungs, the heart, the liver, the skin, all of which must be in a sound and healthy state, to fit us for enjoyment, and to exclude pain; let him consider this, and he must perceive, and perceiving, must acknowledge, that every moment's freedom from suffering, furnishes conclusive proof, that malevolence makes no part of the character of Deity. So complicated is the structure of the human frame, so numerous are its liabilities to disorder and pain, and such a multitude of things must go right, that we may enjoy a moment's ease, that the wonder is, not that we suffer, but that we are ever free from suffering. Freedom from pain, is the general condition of our being; suffering is the exception, and comparatively rare.

Now, were the Deity a malevolent Being, He would have made, as an eminent writer has observed, "every sight loathsome, every sound a screech, every taste nauseous, every smell a stench, and every touch a sting."*

* Paley's Philosophy. In a volume of sermons, pub-

Memory would have presented nothing but terrific pictures of the past, while imagination would have filled us with perpetual terrors of the future; and reason, if reason had been given to us, would have served only to aggravate our misery. Hope, which is now one of the most powerful emotions of our nature, and the soul of our exertions, as the cheerer of our spirits in the hour of trouble, would have been a stranger to our bosoms; apprehensions, gloomy and oppressive, would have occupied its place, and overwhelmed us with despair. Instead of the general law, as now subsisting, by which evils centre in good, every gleam of pleasure, if such ever occurred, would have served only to drag

lished by the late Dr. Price, we find the same argument urged at greater length. "The bee", says the pious and learned author, "would have been without her honey, and the rose without its fragrance.—The fire would have scorched, without warming us. The light of day would have dazzled, without cheering us. The appetites and senses would have been the instruments of torture, and never of pleasure to us, except when turned out of their common course by incidental causes. Every touch would have felt like the rubbing of a wound. Every taste would have been a bitter, and every sound a scream."

us to suffering, and to sharpen its pain. The intention and the contrivance being manifestly evil, and the good only accidental and rare, we should have been justified in attributing the system to a malevolent Being. Such most certainly would have been our fate, if the world had either been created, or were it governed, by a principle of pure malignity.

Far different is the condition, in which we are placed. The constitution of our nature, and the aptitude of surrounding objects to communicate pleasure, clearly disprove the malevolence of their Author. How rare are the instances, in which our senses are offended, compared with those, in which they are gratified, by the works of nature? How many sources of pleasure, animal and intellectual, are presented for our enjoyment?

We cannot look around us, without discovering the most striking manifestations of the Divine goodness. Every sunbeam that lightens man's brow, and cheers his spirit; every flower of the field, that opens its blossom, grateful to smell, and delighting the eye; every bird that sings, charming

the ear; every shower that falls to refresh the earth; the genial atmosphere, the verdant meadow, the perennial water-spring, the smiling corn—all ministering to our pleasures, and our necessities, prove the benevolence of the Great Creator. In every breath we draw, every meal we take, in every hour of repose to recruit our exhausted strength, in every pleasing sensation, every delightful emotion, every gratification of appetite, we have a proof that God is good. There is not a herb of the field, pouring forth the air we breathe, not a wind that blows, purifying the atmosphere, not a rivulet or a fountain, supplying us with water, not a returning sun to warm the earth, contributing to the health, comfort, and sustenance of man and beast, there is not a living species, in the vast scale of animated beings, but evinces the benevolence of the adorable Author of all. If we look at the little insect sporting in the sunny ray, the fish wantoning in the stream, the lamb frisking in the meadow, or drawing its nutriment from its mother's store, or if we contemplate a more interesting object, the infant child in its mother's

bosom, supplied with nourishment, provided at its birth, and suited to its circumstances, can we doubt for a moment, the benevolence of the Being, who gave them existence? The fertility of the earth, the regular supply of our manifold returning wants, the aptitude of every sentient being, to the circumstances in which it is placed, the provision made for its support, its defence, and its enjoyment, the agreeable interchange of day and night, the pleasing vicissitude of the seasons, the various sources of gratification, with which man, above all other creatures, is furnished, amply attest the goodness of Deity. Wherever we cast our eye, we behold impressive testimonies of the Divine benevolence.

It has been contended, that many, if not most, of our pleasures, are the result of association, and that the same object, which proves offensive to one, is agreeable to another, and indifferent to a third. Hence it is argued, that the gratification is accidental, and that the pleasure, which we derive from external objects, is not ascribable to any immediate or direct aptitude in their nature to impart it, but to circumstances purely adventitious and contingent.

That many of our pains and pleasures originate in association, is a fact, which we are ready to admit. It will not be affirmed, however, that our animal gratifications have their origin in this principle. Association may contribute to heighten or lessen animal enjoyment, but it is not the cause. The provision made in the constitution of our nature, and the correspondent aptitude of external objects, for the gratification of appetite, would alone suffice to evince the benevolence of the Creator. But, if we were even to concede that all our pleasures, those especially of a strictly moral and intellectual nature, originate in association, a concession which we are not inclined to make, the reasoning of the Theist would be equally conclusive. For the question would recur, why are our minds constituted with a principle of association? Why is that principle productive of pleasure? If there is neither sublimity nor beauty, in the phenomena of nature, if there be no grandeur in the stupendous mountain, no magnificence in the vaulted heaven, no beauty in the verdant fields, no innate delight in conscious virtue, or ardent piety, if there be nothing in the external objects,

to excite the emotions of sublimity and beauty, nothing in virtue to impart a pleasurable feeling, if our delight is entirely resolvable into a principle of association, is not this principle a part of our mental frame? It affects not the argument, whether the pleasure, which we receive, be derived mediately or immediately from the external objects. If the gratification result from the constitution of our nature, the argument is conclusive.

And here we may remark, how vast is the fund of delight, of which the Theist is conscious, when he contemplates the works of God—a delight of which the Atheist has no conception, and which he can never feel. It is not the loftiness of the mountain, the thunder of the storm, or the roarings of a tempestuous ocean, that excite the emotion of sublimity, and fill the soul with awe. We contemplate them, as grand and majestic, only as they are indications of that invisible and inconceivable Power, by which they are produced. From the stupendous effect, the soul rises spontaneously to the unseen and Almighty Cause. Dissolve the association between the ob-

ject and its Creator, and our sense of sublimity is instantly annihilated. The Atheist views simply the thing presented to his eye, and there he rests. It conveys to him no idea of a cause, beyond itself; it excites, therefore, in his mind no sentiment of reverence, no emotion of awe or admiration, no sense of an Almighty and Supreme Power, no conception of that Eternal Being, the Author of all, that is grand or beautiful in the universe. He may expatiate fluently and speciously on the beauties and sublimities of nature; but, if his mind rests merely on the inanimate object, if it rises not to the great and invisible Cause, if he can survey the swelling ocean, or hear the bursting thunder, if his imagination can travel from worlds to worlds without limit, and suggest not the conception of an Omnipotent Author, whatever he may profess to feel, we pronounce him to be a stranger to the delightful emotion of sublimity.

It is true, we are subject to suffering,—pain and sorrow are inseparable from our condition; from these no man is exempted; but pleasure, or a state of indifference, not

pain, is the general condition of our existence. Our lot might have been the reverse. Why does not the heart always ache? Why does not the pulse throb with incessant fever? Why is the torture of stone, the rackings of gout, the agony of tooth-ache, ever absent from our frame? Why is not the heart always sick with grief, the countenance sad with sorrow, and the eyes streaming with tears? It *might have been* so; nay, if the Deity had been a malignant Being, such *must have been* the condition of our existence. But it is not such, because God is good.

In connection with this argument for the benevolence of Deity, it may be asked in passing, if the Author of nature be not a wise and benevolent Being, or if the world had no intelligent cause, but has existed from eternity, how does it happen, that there are not found some species of beings so formed, that every organ is a source of pain? If this globe has been from eternity, or if intelligence and benevolence had no share in its production, the probability surely is, nay, there is a moral certainty, that some such miserable beings would ex-

ist. None such are found. It is wholly irreconcileable with the presumed prolific powers of nature, and the common doctrine of chances, or a brute necessity, that out of the whole sentient creation not one being should be found, whose organs are so constructed, as to be direct sources of pain, and which may at the same time be capable of continuing its species. The absence of all such organisms can be ascribed to no other cause, than the ordinations of a Wise and Benevolent Author. If chance, or any ignorant power, had governed, I repeat, some such must have existed, unless we are to believe, that unintelligence and malignity must produce the effects of wisdom and benevolence.

If the constitution of nature evinces the goodness of the Deity, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that he is purely benevolent, and that malignity in every degree is abhorrent to his nature. Notwithstanding the corruption and depravity by which our species may, in individual cases, be degraded, experience, I believe, furnishes no evidence of gratuitous malevolence. The odious feeling of malignity is the offspring

of envy; of jealousy, of hatred, or a sense of injury. In one or other of these passions or feelings it originates. The envious man hates a superior, and seeks his humiliation; the jealous man desires to see his rival defeated; and the revengeful thirsts after the destruction of his enemy, because he has suffered from him injury, and fears its repetition. It is our weakness, our feeling of inferiority, our liability to the attacks of enmity, our sense of the wrongs, which we have suffered, or may suffer,—in short, it is the conflicting interests and passions of mankind, that rouse the emotion of malevolence. In the Almighty Sovereign of the universe, no selfish fears, no noxious passions, no angry feelings, by which malignity can be generated, can have any place. There exists no superior to awaken envy, no rival to excite jealousy, or to cross His purposes, no adversary to inflict injury, or inflame resentment. In a Being, elevated above every exciting cause, it would imply a contradiction to suppose malignity to exist.

If we contemplate then the immensity of the universe, and the constitution of that

system to which we belong, we cannot but feel a firm conviction, that the Deity is a Wise, a Powerful, and a Benevolent Being. Let us proceed to examine one or two objections, which have been urged by Sceptics against the doctrine of the divine attributes.

SECTION VI.

Some objections urged, and obviated.

SOME philosophers, while they acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being, would endeavour to persuade us, that his attributes are to us utterly incomprehensible; and that we are chargeable with presumption, if we conceive ourselves capable of forming any conception whatever of the Divine Nature. "We know", says Hobbes, "that God is, though not, what he is." . . . . "The attributes given unto the Deity are such, as signify either our own incapacity, or our reverence; our incapacity, when we say incomprehensible, or infinite; our reverence, when we give him those names, which

among us are the names of those things, we most magnify and commend, as omnipotent, omniscient, just, merciful, &c." Hume, adopting the same opinion, would persuade us, that though we ascribe, "wisdom, thought, design, and knowledge," to the Deity, "because these words are honourable among men, and we have no other language, or other conceptions, by which we can express our adoration of him, we should beware lest we think, that our ideas anywise correspond to his perfections, or that his attributes have any resemblance to those qualities among men." .... "Thought, design, intelligence, such as we discover in men, and other animals, is no more, than one of the springs and principles of the universe, as well as heat or cold, attraction or repulsion, and a hundred others, which fall within our daily observation. It is an active cause, by which some particular parts of nature, we find, produce alterations in other parts. But can a conclusion with any propriety be transferred from parts to the whole? Does not the great disproportion bar all inference?" .... "Is there any reasonable

ground to conclude, that the inhabitants of other planets possess thought, intelligence, reason, or any thing similar to these faculties of ours?"

Whether the belief, which the philosopher of Malmesbury professed in the existence of Deity, was sincere, or, as his enemies alleged, a mere profession, dictated by mean and selfish fears, has been a matter of doubt. It is not our intention to charge him with Atheism. The passage here quoted certainly expresses the conviction of a Supreme Cause; but, if it robs that Cause of every attribute, by which, and by which only, we can form a conception of his nature, there is nothing left for the understanding to apprehend. That Hume renounced all belief in the existence of an Intelligent Author of the universe, is a fact not to be questioned. His sentiments and language, while he discusses the subject, present a most disgusting example of unpardonable temerity, equally unworthy of the philosopher and the man. While he attempts to degrade the great Creator of the world, by low and contemptible ridicule, he professes at the same

time to believe, that the attributes of Deity are too exalted for the human mind to form any conception of their nature.

That mankind have, in all ages, betrayed a propensity to regard the Deity, as resembling one of themselves, is a truth, which the history of almost all religions too amply attests. The Epicureans believed, that the gods were clothed in human shape, this being the only form with which they experienced intellect to be conjoined. The association, indeed, in our conception, between the human figure and intellectual or moral qualities, is so powerful, and such the impossibility of picturing in our minds any quality in the abstract *, or as dissociated from all substance, that the imagination naturally embodies every moral and intellectual attribute in some cor-

* It has been already remarked, that we speak and reason of qualities, as separate from their substances, but in imagination, as in sensation, they are incapable of being disunited. *Whiteness*, for example, is the generic name of a quality, as *man*, *house*, *tree*, are generic names of substances; and we may reason about this quality in the abstract; but we cannot picture to ourselves the idea of whiteness, without referring it to something possessed of this quality.

poreal form. Hence have originated anthropomorphitism and idolatry. These, however, are errors, which reflection enables us to correct. To entertain adequate conceptions of an Eternal and Infinite Being, is indeed impossible, yet believing in His existence, we are irresistibly led by the constitution of our nature to form such ideas of His being and attributes, as the system, in which we are placed, forcibly impresses, and such as lay the foundation of sound and rational piety. From the nature of an effect, we necessarily judge of the properties of its cause. From the general conduct of a voluntary agent, we infer, with certainty, his moral and intellectual character. If we lived under the government of an absolute monarch, whose political measures were so conceived, and so executed, as to produce order, virtue, and happiness, among his people, we should ascribe to him the qualities of wisdom, power, and benevolence; nor would it be possible for us to conclude otherwise. To suppose folly to act in wisdom, weakness to display power, and malignity to aim at general good, would be to suppose

a contradiction. In the same manner, if, in the economy of nature, we discover the most striking examples of concurrences of means to ends, if we observe such a complex, yet harmonious relation, and connection of the parts, and their agency so adjusted, that order and happiness are the general result, we are impelled to infer intelligence in the contrivance, power in the execution, and benevolence in the motive. Here, as in the other case, we reason from the effect to the cause. Intelligence, power, and benevolence, are names of our conceptions of the qualities of the agent; and whenever these conceptions are similar, we must, if we wish to be understood, designate them by the same appellations. Ingenuity in converting knowledge to useful purposes, we call wisdom, ability to execute, we term power, and the affection or motive, which prompts to their exercise, we denominate benevolence. And, if we conceive the man, who plans, and carries into effect, measures for the common good, to be wise, powerful, and benevolent, by what rule are we either to conceive otherwise, or to form no conception, of the Au-

thor of nature, the source of all, that we consider to be wise, great, and good? To affirm, that there is no analogy between human wisdom and divine wisdom, human benevolence and divine benevolence, is to tell us, that the quality is not specific and determinate in itself, but is dependent on the subject, in which it resides. This, surely, is a most palpable fallacy. To say, that there is no resemblance whatever between our mental qualities, and His attributes, is to affirm, that we should form no conception of Deity,—that we are not to call that wisdom in Him, which in every other instance, we designate by that name. Infinite, indeed, must be the disparity between the puny and imperfect endowments of man, and the perfections of God; but, though in degree infinitely different, they may not be dissimilar in kind. The grain of sand on the sea-shore is but an atom to the material universe; but still it is matter. That the Deity sees and hears, as we do, —that his knowledge, like ours, is acquired by experience and observation,—that He reasons like us, or that His power needs adventitious aid, or may be exhausted by ex-

ertion; to entertain such notions of His nature, would indeed be highly derogatory to his character. His knowledge is intuitive; past, present, and future are equally before Him, and with Him to will is to act. But, because the disparity between infinite perfections and finite powers, is readily acknowledged, it surely does not follow, that we are not to believe that to be wisdom, which, by the very constitution of our nature, we must conceive to be wisdom. From acknowledged design, we infer intelligence; and our conviction of intelligence, as an attribute of Deity, cannot be weakened by the reflection, that we are incapable of comprehending its infinite extent, or its modes of operation.

"Thought, design, intelligence, such as we discover in men and other animals, is no more," says Mr. Hume, "than one of the springs and principles of the universe, as well as heat and cold, attraction and repulsion;" and he asks, if there be any reasonable ground to "conclude, that the inhabitants of other planets possess thought, intelligence, reason, or any thing similar to these faculties of ours." Because thought

is a spring or principle of the universe, and an active cause of change, how does it hence follow, that it has no existence, but on this globe? By what process of reasoning is this deduction evolved. The very contrary conclusion is surely the more rational. If thought and intelligence, like heat and cold, attraction and repulsion, are principles of action in the universe, is it not a contradiction to limit them to our globe? The reasoning of the author is its own refutation. To affirm the universality of any substance or quality, and yet to restrict its existence to one place, is an egregious absurdity.

If we are convinced that a Deity exists, we must either believe, that the conceptions of his nature, which the mental constitution, which he has given us, irresistibly leads us to form, are such as he intended; or that the powers of our mind, though given by him, are not subject to his direction. We must either believe, that we may truly infer His wisdom, His power, and His goodness, from the works of nature, or that He has endowed us with faculties only to delude us. What other

beings may be, I know not; but my ignorance here does not affect my belief in what I do know. That there is a God, and that I am a creature of His power, is my firm conviction; and if He has so constituted my mind, that I cannot but form such conceptions of Him, as the works of nature and my faculties suggest, I must believe that these conceptions were intended. If it had been His purpose, that I should form no notion of His being and attributes, He would have withheld those faculties, by which I am enabled in some degree to apprehend His nature. I should have been like the animal in the common, insensible to the existence of a Supreme Being.

It is vain to urge, that our sensations and perceptions result from our particular constitution, that they may be peculiar to us, that other beings may have sentiments and feelings totally dissimilar to ours, that they may have no sensation of heat or cold, no idea of attraction and repulsion, no memory, no judgement. Be it so. We must either believe that all our sensations and perceptions are fallacies, that our mental

faculties are mere delusions, and that we ought to believe nothing; or we must believe, that whatever diversity of constitution exists between us and other beings, this diversity was designed by the Creator of all; and that, if our peculiar constitution leads us to ascribe certain attributes to Deity, from the contemplation of His works, it was His purpose, that it should be so, and that in ascribing to Him these attributes, we are obeying those laws of reflection and reason, which He himself has ordained. The laws of mind, and those of matter, are equally of His appointment. The preceding observations, it is hoped, are sufficient to expose the inconsistency of Mr. Hume, and the invalidity of his reasoning. We proceed now to examine an objection, of far greater weight, and much more embarrassing.

It is objected:—If the Deity is a Being purely benevolent, why is evil, moral and physical, permitted to exist under His government; How is this attribute to be reconciled with incontestable facts, which melancholy experience daily presents to us? Why is man subject to pain and sor-

row, to sickness and to death? Why are not poverty and famine, war and pestilence, with their numerous train of attendant evils, excluded from his works? Why are the volcano and the hurricane, the flood and the earthquake, suffered to interrupt the harmony of nature, and to ravage the vegetable and animal creation? Why are moral evils, which are still more destructive, anger and malignity, envy and pride, tyranny and ambition, revenge and cruelty, permitted to scourge the human race? Can pure benevolence delight in the existence of disorder, or in the infliction of misery? Is the evil, which man, and the inferior creation are doomed to bear, reconcileable with the hypothesis of the infinite power, the infinite wisdom, and the infinite goodness of their Maker? If Deity possesses infinite knowledge to devise the best plan, infinite benevolence to prompt Him to adopt it, and infinite power to carry it into effect, why is not every production of His hand free from imperfection? Why is any species of evil permitted to exist? This is a question superlatively interesting,

a question, which the theologist and the philosopher have ardently endeavoured to resolve,—a question to which every reflecting mind must approach, with a deep conviction of its magnitude and its difficulty.

The arguments, which have been offered in vindication of the attributes of power, wisdom, and goodness, simply, are satisfactory and conclusive; but that every attempt which has been made, to reconcile moral and physical evil, with the *infinitude* of these attributes, has failed, every candid mind, we apprehend, must be compelled, however reluctantly, to acknowledge. Hence, some pious men have been tempted rashly to question the infinitude of one or other of the Divine perfections. Such solutions of the question we reject as false, and as derogatory to the character of the Divine Being. That evil exists, is a truth not to be denied; but that the attributes of Deity must be infinite, we pronounce to be not only a truth, but a metaphysical certainty. The arguments, which have been adduced, with the view of mutually

reconciling these two propositions, we proceed to examine. Their insufficiency, we apprehend, must be felt and admitted.

1st, It is observed, that a vast majority of existing evils are incidental, and not intended. The teeth were formed to masticate, and not to ache; the air to vivify, and not to blast; the sun to warm, and not to scorch. But are there not many direct evils, which this observation leaves unexplained; and, in regard to those which are incidental, it may be asked, did not the Deity foresee them? or foreseeing, could He not exclude them?

2dly, It is urged that no evil exists, which is not productive of a balance of good. But why, under the government of infinite perfections, is not the good produced, without the medium of evil? Why is a minor evil necessary to the exclusion of a greater?

3dly, It is observed, that the calamities and sorrows to which we are liable, furnish exercise for the most exalted virtues. It is true. But this consideration is inapplicable to the numerous evils, which the

inferior creation suffer, unseen and unknown.

4thly, It is argued, that, though every general law in its usual, and evidently intended operation, is productive of good, it must occasionally, when crossed by another law, produce partial disorder and inconvenience. It may be asked, however, why are general laws established, which answer their end only in a majority of instances, and whose purpose is every now and then defeated? Is not infinite wisdom and infinite power, capable of ordaining laws, which shall be universally productive of good?

5thly, It is observed, that, as there exists undeniably a preponderance of enjoyment, and as this preponderance is continued and multiplied, through an endless succession of ages, extending, therefore, to an unlimited series of sentient beings, this infinite balance of happiness evinces the infinite goodness of its Author. It would seem, however, that this explanation of the difficulty is merely verbal; and amounts to nothing, but a limitation of the term *in-*

finity, to the duration of happiness, in exclusion of its quantity, at any given period. This is not the infinitude, in which we are interested; nor can attributes, exhibited in endless duration, be regarded as infinite, if their exercise is confined to the production of only a mixed condition of good and evil. And if this balance of happiness were extended through infinite space and infinite ages, would not the misery, intermixed with it, be likewise infinite?

6thly, It is argued, that evil results from imperfection; and that to maintain, that infinite attributes should, in every instance, produce the highest possible good, is to affirm, that there ought to be no gradations of existence, and that all beings should be alike, and the best possible. To this argument it has been answered, that the physical power of every intelligent being can be exerted only in accordance with his moral and intellectual qualities; and that where the latter are perfect, the former cannot be employed in producing imperfection. The fallacy of this reply, we shall have an opportunity of exposing.

The argument, in vindication of the be-

nevolence of Deity, founded in the hypothesis of philosophical liberty, must be rejected, as weak and unsatisfactory. While it is entirely inapplicable to the numerous physical evils, to which we are liable, and in the production of which we have no share, it accounts for the existence of moral evil, either by denying the Omniscience of Deity*, or by offering a distinction between the permission, and the ordination of evil, which, in all our reasonings on the character of man's moral conduct, would be pronounced inadmissible. To permit an evil, which we can prevent, or knowingly to furnish the means of its production, is to assent to its creation. And to urge, that more good than evil results from man's free agency, in the controversial sense of the term, is to assert a proposition, if not paradoxical, at least impossible to be proved†. And if the affirmation were

* See Beattie on the Immutability of Truth, p. 352. 5th Ed.

† The following observations by Dr. Sumner, Bishop of Chester, are sound and unanswerable. "It is a position, wholly untenable, that according to our view of the subject, the degree of moral evil must necessarily have

demonstrated, the objection would still recur. But the hypothesis itself, if not re-

been as great as it is, unless an absolute restraint had been laid on the will of man. Without entering into metaphysical discussion, it may be safely assumed, that the will is determined by the greater apparent good; and that, when it makes a bad election in defiance of reason and judgment, the dismission of some present uneasiness, or the possession of some present gratification, is the greatest apparent good at the time being. Had then their real interest been placed before mankind, with a clear distinctness, which we can certainly conceive, because we have examples of it on record, free will, though exposed to less chance of error, would not have been annihilated, and yet it would have been as morally impossible for man to choose evil, in opposition to good, as we imagine to be for the glorified inheritors of a future state, as it is proved to be for Jesus Christ, during his adoption of human nature, with its temptations and infirmities; or to go no farther, as it appears to be for good men, when they approach the termination of their course, after a long perseverance in the habit and practice of virtue. If any one denies, that this might have been to our rational apprehension a better state, such a one must be led by the force of consequence to deny, that it would have been happier for mankind, if our first parents and all their posterity, had withstood the temptation to which they were exposed, and remained with the liability to error, but without the error. Yet the description, which might have suited the state of man, if he had never fallen into moral evil, represents a brighter scene, than the face of the world, such as we now live in, can realize."

jected as absurd, will by many be pronounced to be false. It is the motive, and this only, which determines the moral character of every action; and man is free, because he acts as he wills, and not because his will is subject to no law.

* The doctrine of philosophical necessity has been greatly misunderstood. I will endeavour briefly to illustrate it. Two actions are before me, A and B. If I wish to do A, and a physical restraint is applied to prevent me, I am not free; and in doing B, I am not a moral, because I am not a voluntary, agent. If I do A, as I wish to do, I act voluntarily, and am therefore a moral agent. But when I act voluntarily, it is by no means implied, that I act without a motive. My will is governed by my view of the circumstances before me at the time. It has no self-determining power; for this would imply a volition without a motive, which would involve the absurdity of an effect without a cause. I am free in choosing according to my view of the circumstances, and I am free in acting according to my will. It may be asked, could I have willed the other action, B? Unquestionably; but not in precisely the same circumstances; for this would imply a contradiction: for, with a volition to choose A from my view of the case, and at the same time to choose B, would be impossible. But, in order to shew, that I am free to will according to motives, I might prefer B to A, if any person were to deny that I had it not in my power to will B. All that the Necessarian affirms is, that the will, like every other power in our nature, is governed by its peculiar laws. All that he denies is, that

These are the arguments which have been offered, in order to reconcile the existence of moral and physical evil, with the infinitude of the Divine attributes. That they are insufficient to remove the difficulty, and to furnish a satisfactory solution of the question, every intelligent mind must feel, and every candid mind acknowledge. Hence several theologists and philosophers have been led to question, some the omnipotence, some the infinite wisdom, and others the infinite goodness of the Deity.

It has been maintained, that infinity can-

we have a self-determining will, that is, the possibility of willing without a motive. I may prefer the weaker to the stronger motive; but I must have a motive for the preference. My choice is foreseen by an Omniscient Being, and may be perhaps anticipated with moral certainty by human wisdom; but my choice does not take place in consequence of its being foreseen, any more than the magnet will attract iron, because the attraction is foreseen. The doctrine of philosophical necessity is egregiously misconceived, when it is supposed to imply, that we cannot act as we will, or, if the expression were allowed, *will, as we please.* It merely affirms, that we cannot please to will this or that, without a motive. It is our freedom to will according to motives, or our view of circumstances, of which freedom every man is conscious, that constitutes man a moral agent. Dismiss the influence of motives, and his conduct has no moral character.

not be predicated of the benevolence, as it may be affirmed of the wisdom and power of the Deity. This was the opinion of Bolingbroke. "God", says an eminent mathematician *, in his defence of Newton, "cannot be said to be infinitely good, as he may be said to be infinitely powerful, or infinitely wise; but he is always so far good, as is consistent with his wisdom." When the power and knowledge of the agent are limited, and the means are not entirely subject to his control,—when contingent and unforeseen evils may defeat his intention, and where, to produce pure and unmixed good is known to exceed his power, then indeed, in the exercise of his benevolence, caution and prudence are indispensably necessary, lest, in attempting good, he may produce evil, or the evil produced may equal, or overbalance, the good intended. The tempers, dispositions, and circumstances generally, physical and intellectual, of those whom he desires to benefit, not being in his power, he must accommodate his favours to these circumstances. His benevolence must be regulated and directed by

Emerson.

his wisdom. No judicious parent will grant a momentary gratification to a child, which, he has reason to believe, may prove afterwards the source of much pain; nor will the skilful surgeon feel his humanity impeachable, if, in order to save life, or restore health, he scruples not to amputate a diseased limb. But from the limited powers of man we ought not to reason, to the perfections and operations of the Almighty and All-wise Creator of the universe, by whose authority the laws of physical and moral nature were established, and to whose control they are continually subject. The machinist must accommodate his skill to the materials, with which, and on which, he is to operate, incapable as he is of altering their nature; and the wisdom of man must, in every case, adapt his proceedings to those established laws, which govern the system, in which he is placed. In the exercise of benevolence he must be ruled by discretion, and is often reduced to the painful necessity of withholding good, and inflicting evil. He is unable to alter the constitution of nature; he can neither create nor annihilate a single atom; the condition

in which he exists is that of dependence and subjection: and what benevolence would prompt him to confer, wisdom, aware of the consequences, and incapable of excluding them, admonishes him to deny. But is this the condition of Deity? Is there any consequence which He cannot prevent? Is there any physical or moral cause, which He did not appoint? Is His wisdom exercised in accommodation to laws, which he cannot control? Or does He deny that, which benevolence would grant, because He knows not how to avert the evil, which the concession would create? To adopt such an opinion is to limit the attributes of Deity, a Being necessarily infinite. It is to arraign that wisdom, and degrade that power, which it professes to exalt.

Paley affirms the omnipotence of Deity, and also His infinite goodness. It is with inexpressible astonishment we hear him, at the same time conceding, when treating of incidental evils, that they may possibly be regarded as defects in contrivance. How is this opinion to be reconciled with his admission of unlimited perfections? To

suppose that consummate wisdom can err, or the power of an Eternal and Independent Being be controlled, is to suppose a contradiction. A defect in contrivance, as imputed to unlimited intelligence, is an absurdity. A common machinist, if guilty of an accidental error, will proceed to correct it. A defect, indeed, in *his* machine, may be unavoidable, occasioned by the nature of the materials, which he is obliged to employ. But to the Deity, matter and its powers, the creations of His will, must be universally obedient. How monstrous the notion, that there can be a defect of wisdom in a Being, the fountain of all knowledge, and whose all-seeing eye no cause, no effect, can possibly escape, and whose power nothing created can control!

Another solution of the difficulty in question has been proposed, which, at first view, seems to be satisfactory; but, when examined, will be found to remove it only one short step. Some philosophers, learned and pious Theists, believing, that the existence of moral and physical evils, whether they arise incidentally, or directly, from the existing constitution

of things, is irreconcileable with infinite benevolence, as combined with infinite power and infinite wisdom, have adopted the opinion, that the system, to which we belong, is not the production of the Deity, but of a being of an inferior order, himself a creature, to whom its government also has been delegated by the Supreme Ruler of the universe. This was the hypothesis of the late Drs. Clarke and Franklin.

This doctrine, by referring the production and government of this world to a created being, explains how this system exhibits evils and imperfections, as they appear to us, necessarily resulting from the limited powers of its author and governor. If from infinite perfections, we infer perfect order, and perfect happiness, from circumscribed powers, we should anticipate some degree of irregularity and suffering. The evils existing in our system are perfectly reconcileable with the agency of a being, whose power, wisdom, and goodness are limited, and whose operations are supposed to be independent, unaided, and uncontrolled.

In favour of this doctrine, it may be urged, that it not only accounts for existing imperfections, but is supported by analogy, and consonant with our experience, in the government of human affairs. It is by means of subordinate agents, that the Author of our system conducts the administration of all our concerns. To the parent is delegated the care of his children; the servant is subject to the will and direction of his master; to the prince is committed the government of his people; and man, in a great degree, is constituted the lord and sovereign of the inferior creation. We find a delegated power obtaining through the whole of our system; the happiness of some being dependent on the conduct of others; and the care of many entrusted to the government of one. In perfect analogy with this state of things, the Supreme Author of nature, it is said, may have committed the production and government of this globe to the care of a being of high order in the scale of creation, whose province it is to superintend our concerns, and to perfect a plan of his own, of which we see at present only a part.

This hypothesis, then, recommends itself by two considerations. It accounts for the origin of evil, and is consonant with that economy, which we experience in the conduct of human concerns. It is also in accordance with the general constitution of physical nature. The material universe seems to be divided into distinct systems of worlds. Analogy leads us to this conclusion:—It may be, that each of these systems is committed to the charge of some superior being, by whom may be delegated the care of each separate orb to some subordinate agent. This is a doctrine, indeed, purely conjectural; but it is not irrational; while, at the same time, it derives some support from the distribution of the physical universe into systems, each, as it would seem, dependent on the agency of one principal physical power. In ours, the solar orb enlightens, and controls the whole, attaching, as it were, to its genial and fostering influence, the planetary spheres, until both it and the system arrive at the great centre of all attraction, to which they seem to be gradually approaching.

This solution of the question is specious,

and there are many Christians, with whose sentiments it perfectly accords. But still the same difficulty remains. Every act, every operation, of the inferior agent, must ultimately be referred to Deity. If the powers, with which the Architect of our system was endowed, were not adequate to the exclusion of evil, why were not powers communicated to him, commensurate with the desired effect? If we suppose, that the Deity did not foresee their inadequacy, we question His omniscience; if we believe that he foresaw it, but could not supply the defect, we impugn His omnipotence; if we believe that inclination was wanting, we arraign His goodness.

If, again, it should be said, that the powers of every created being must be limited, and that nothing but infinite perfection can exclude evil, the question arises, why did the Deity permit that to be imperfectly done by another, which might have been perfectly accomplished by Himself? Here, we perceive, the objection recurs; and that the hypothesis merely shifts the difficulty. The operations of the inferior agent, as has been already observed, must

be referred to the Deity as the primary cause; for can it be supposed, that the Supreme Lord of nature would permit the inferior being, acting under his own omniscient eye, to err in the exercise of those powers, with which He had invested him: or that He would entrust the condition of a world of sentient and intelligent creatures to the government of a being liable to error, unless subject to His own infallible direction and control?

To this examination of the attempts which have been made to reconcile the existence of evil with the perfections of Deity, there is one observation, which we shall take the liberty to subjoin, not as a resolution of the question, which we have been discussing, but as serving to shew one important benefit, which we derive from the mixed nature of that system, to which we belong.

We have every reason to believe, that no pure evil exists; and that amidst all our sufferings there are none, which are not, either directly or indirectly, conducive to individual or general good. Among the various beneficial purposes, to which moral

and physical evils are rendered subservient, there is one, which appears to me of considerable moment; and, as I am not aware, that it has been noticed by any preceding writer, or at least presented in the light, in which I am inclined to view it, I submit it, with diffidence, to the judgment of the candid and intelligent reader.

It seems to me, after carefully examining the subject, that it is through the medium of evil, that we arrive at the knowledge of a Wise and Designing Cause, and also of the Divine Benevolence. I am fully sensible, that, in offering this opinion, I may possibly incur the charge of proposing a paradox, if not an absurdity. I will briefly state the ground, on which the opinion rests; the reader will then judge for himself.

When we infer design from the construction of any curious and complicated piece of machinery, we perceive, that the materials of which it is made, the formation of the several parts, and the arrangement of them into one whole, are such as are adapted to the effect, which we presume to have been intended. But, if we had no concep-

tion of unfit materials, or of an improper form of parts, or an incongruous arrangement, the machine, how ingeniously soever constructed, could not impress us with any indication of design, nor, in truth, could we form any notion of ingenuity. This is self-evident; for in design are implied the contemplation of an end, and the adaptation of means; but to adjust means to an end, implies a choice of circumstances; and where there can be no conception of defect, imperfection, or error,—no idea of greater or less aptitude, or an unfitness for the purpose, there can be no idea of choice, no exercise for discrimination. It is the selection of certain materials out of many sorts, the adoption of certain out of various forms of parts, and the arrangement of the whole out of various possible collocations, that display the hand of intelligence in the construction of any piece of mechanism. The same observation is applicable to the constitution of the universe. It is from the selection of fit means to beneficial ends, out of numberless possibilities of a contrary tendency, that we infer the intelligence and benevolence of the Author. As

from uninterrupted light, we should have no idea of darkness, so from a state of things uniformly good, we should have no conception of evil or imperfection, and therefore no evidence of design, or benevolence. We might enjoy happiness; but, having no idea of any other state of being, we could not suppose any other to be possible. Now, benevolence is the affection, by which we desire the happiness of others, or *wish them well;* but the term *well* is relative, and is opposed to *ill;* if, therefore, we had no idea of evil or imperfection, we should have no conception of any benevolent emotion. It may be urged perhaps, that, even in such a state, we might wish, that others should advance in happiness, and might therefore feel, and have an idea of benevolence. This appears to be impossible. To wish increasing enjoyment to others, implies the idea of imperfection and defect; and, therefore, the evils arising from these. If the constitution of things were perfect, as far as we could conceive perfection, we should have no notion of higher felicity. But might we not wish, that they might continue in their existing

state of happiness? This seems equally impossible, for it would imply, that they either might be unhappy, or that they might be less happy; and, therefore, the possibility of evil or defect, of which we could evidently have no conception.

It is manifest, then, that it is the mixed condition of our present existence, which leads us to the conviction of an Almighty and Designing Power. This is one invaluable benefit, which we derive from the chequered constitution of the system, in which we are placed. Why this system and our intellectual nature should be so framed, that a certain portion of evil and imperfection should be necessary to impress our minds with the belief of a Supreme Being, is not granted to man to know. But this seems undeniable, that, if we had no notion of error or defect, we should have no idea of choice or design; and if we had no conception of greater or less happiness, no experience of evil, we should have no feeling, no notion of benevolence.

It may be admitted, perhaps, that it is by our ideas of disorder and defect, imper-

fection and error, acquired from the phenomena of nature, and our own personal experience, that we deduce the existence of intelligence and contrivance, in choosing means for the production of an effect; but it may be asked whether an Omnipotent and Omniscient Power could not have made us capable of arriving at some knowledge of His existence, without the medium of these imperfections. The possibility must be granted, that the Deity could have exalted man above his present grade, in the scale of creation, and rendered him, by the constitution of his mind, capable of attaining to the knowledge of a Supreme Being, without subjecting him to pain and suffering. But, on this supposition, man would not be man, but a creature of a superior order. Why the Deity has so constituted our faculties, that it is by the mixed system, in which we are placed, that we ascend from the contemplation of surrounding phenomena, characterized by good and evil, to a conviction of His existence, is a question which we are as incapable of answering, and might be as pertinently asked, as why man is not a seraph,

or why the lower orders of creation have no notion of a First Cause. It is sufficient to reply, that a gradation of beings is not irreconcileable with the Divine perfections. To this part of our subject we shall now direct our attention.

It has been asked, why are not all created beings as perfect and as happy as possible? Would not the infinite attributes of the Deity, if we reason *à priori*, lead us to conclude, that such would be their condition? The question here proposed, if it refer to absolute happiness, evidently implies, that a gradation of sentient and intelligent beings is incompatible with the infinitude of the divine perfections. Now, it is obvious, that, if it be essential to the notion of infinite perfections, that in every act of creation they be exerted to the utmost, or, if we may so express it, be exhausted; if it be essential to the exercise of infinite attributes, that every being be the highest and best possible, not relatively, but absolutely, then every atom of matter should be an angel, or every particle a universe. There could be no inferiority of condition, no subordination of parts.

Every existing substance being absolutely the best possible, all degrees of rank would be excluded. A material world would then have no existence; for a system composed of substances, in which each part should be equal in power and excellence to the whole, is a manifest impossibility. This is self-evident. If the highest intelligence possible should be attached to an atom, and if that atom, as being material, were divisible, this atom, as the objection requires, should have been formed into thousands of intelligent beings, and each of these, as composed of parts, into a thousand others, and so on to infinity. In short, the enquiry issues in the absurd questions,—Why are there not wholes without parts? Or why are not parts made equal to wholes?

It is evident, then, that to presume the highest possible happiness in every instance, from the infinite perfections of Deity, is to presume a contradiction; and, as there can be no limit in the possible improvement of a finite being, and as gradations of rank and enjoyment must follow from the exhaustless energies of Omni-

potence, that must be regarded as the best possible, which is the best in its peculiar circumstances

Will it be contended, that as Omnipotence is not limited, and if a gradation of orders be inseparable from material beings, others might have been created, to which such gradation would have been unnecessary? This, indeed, is to push presumption to extremity. It is to contend, that the Deity, from eternity, should have created a universe of beings purely spiritual, all possessing the highest possible happiness, and all possessing susceptibilities and faculties incapable of improvement. To a dogma like this, it might suffice to reply, that it is not for such a creature as man to prescribe the procedure of an Omnipotent and Omniscient Being. But we will not return this answer. The objection, if urged by the materialist, involves extreme inconsistency; and, on whatever hypothesis it may be offered, is manifestly absurd. It involves inconsistency;

* The talons of an eagle, though the best adapted to its nature, would be a bad substitute for the hoof of a horse, or the foot of a dog.

for the materialist denies the existence of pure spirit; and the argument is absurd, as limiting the energies of the power, on the infinitude of which power the reasoning is founded. It supposes, that omnipotence combined with infinite wisdom and benevolence, may be exhausted. It presumes, that the Deity can give existence to beings so happy, that He Himself cannot augment their enjoyment,—that He has endowed them with such faculties, and furnished them with such sources of gratification, that even infinite power, directed by infinite wisdom, and prompted by unlimited goodness, is incapable of enlarging them. Is not this to build an argument on the infinitude of the Divine perfections, and yet deny that infinitude? Is there any boundary to omnipotence but a contradiction? any point at which it can be said, "Thus much can it bestow, but no more"? The argument evidently subverts itself by an implied negation of what it presumes.

If, then, no created being can be so wise, so good, or so happy, as to be unsusceptible of improvement by the Divine Being, it follows, that gradations in hap-

piness, both in classes and individuals, are not only reconcileable with the infinitude of the Divine perfections, but necessarily result from it. To suppose that any order of beings, how exalted soever, can exist, whose felicity it would exceed the power of Omnipotence and Omniscience to improve, would involve a contradiction. It would imply, that what is incapable of diminution is yet exhaustible; and that infinite perfections are in their exercise limited; or that a finite quantity may be unsusceptible of increase, even by Omnipotence. And, if it is consistent with His benevolence, that such gradation should exist, it is equally compatible with the same attribute, that not only each class, but each individual, should be formed capable of an indefinite progression in happiness.

Again, if the question be confined to relative happiness, and if it be asked, why is not every creature relatively perfect, enjoying all the gratifications of which its senses are capable, and exempt from pain, it may be answered, that, if such a state of things be deemed reconcileable with the

Divine perfections, a mixed condition seems equally compatible with these attributes. If there *must* be gradations of being,—if no creature can be placed in that state of enjoyment, which infinite wisdom and infinite power cannot improve, it may be urged, that it matters little or nothing to the several orders in the scale of existence, whether a certain portion of happiness be allotted to every one, pure and unalloyed, or a larger portion, mingled with suffering; provided the balance in the latter case equal, or exceed, the sum of enjoyments in the former. If, for example, a race of beings, endowed with only one sense, should enjoy a certain degree of happiness, derived from that sense, without any mixture of pain; and if their condition, as being relatively perfect, is allowed to be consistent with the infinitude of the Divine attributes, how can it be deemed incompatible with the same attributes, to create another race, with two or more senses, sources of pleasure, in a vast majority of instances, but occasionally causes of pain? Would man, with all the ills to which he is subject, exchange his

condition for that of the oyster or the snail? Or would any rational being consent to be deprived of the senses of sight and hearing, though his eyes and ears should be occasionally diseased, on condition that the other three senses were exempted from every thing painful or offensive? We may confidently answer in the negative. If, then, there must be degrees of capacity and enjoyment, the objection against a scale of beings, and gradations of happiness, falls to the ground; and if it be admitted, that relatively perfect and pure gratification, would be compatible with the infinitude of the Divine attributes, it cannot consistently be denied, that a mixed condition, with a large preponderance of enjoyment, is reconcileable with the same attributes. This argument seems to carry with it very considerable weight.

Again. The phenomena of nature prove the Author of our system to be wise, powerful, and good. But finite effects cannot evince an infinite cause; and a finite being can perceive only finite effects. Man, therefore, cannot possibly have, in limited phenomena, direct evi-

dence of an infinite cause, in the strictly metaphysical sense of the term, any more than distance can furnish him with a proof of infinite space. Infinitude is a deduction of reason, and not the communication of sense. Whatever, therefore, might be the character of our system, if not a single evil existed in its economy, our conclusion of infinite goodness could not be derived from the phenomena simply. If we had no conception of a better state, we should have no notion of an attribute, producing enjoyment without limit; and, if we were capable of conceiving higher happiness, the objection would still be, what it is now,—how is lower than possible happiness reconcileable with infinite perfection? It is obvious, then, that the difficulty is inseparable from our finite nature, and that it does not press peculiarly on a mixed system like ours; but must have accompanied our condition, if man, with his present rational powers, and a conception of higher enjoyment, had been exempted from every moral and physical evil.

We are aware, that the question recurs,

could not an equal degree of happiness without any admixture of evil, be produced by Omnipotence? The possibility must be granted. But, while at the same time it must be admitted on the other hand, that a higher state of enjoyment on the whole, though accompanied with a portion of suffering, than the supposed condition of pure good can yield, is also producible by infinite power, it is evident, that there can be no limit to the question, why not still a better, if the being or beings be capable of conceiving a state superior to their own. If this view of the question be correct, the difficulty resolves itself into the absurd question, why does not infinite power confer a degree of happiness, which infinite power cannot augment?

We have now offered to the consideration of the reader, such reflections, as have occurred to us, in pondering the subject of our present discussion. Of the validity of the arguments, the metaphysical enquirer will form his own estimate. This however we confidently affirm, that no proposition is more clearly demonstrable, than, that in the Divine Being no imper-

fection can exist, and that in Him, therefore, there can be no defect either of power, or of wisdom, or of goodness. With whatever difficulties the conclusion, that these attributes belong to Deity in an infinite degree, may be accompanied, to this conclusion we must come, or we must embrace a contradiction. Let us attend to the arguments, by which this position is established.

We observe moral and physical evils obtaining in our system. The first question is, have we reason to believe, that the power and wisdom of Deity are, or are not, adequate to their exclusion? If the negative should appear the more probable alternative, it follows, that these attributes cannot be infinite; if, on the contrary, the affirmative should be established by the more cogent evidence, then it follows, that these evils furnish no argument against the infinite power and wisdom of Deity. We have now, then, to inquire into the probability, that the mixed state of things in which we are placed, is to be attributed to a defect either of wisdom, or of power.

When we survey the anomalies and evils

in the economy of our system, we find, that they bear a small proportion to their contraries. Regularity and happiness predominate; the exceptions to the general rule are few. Now, there appears no reason for supposing, that the same wisdom and power, which provided for the means of excluding irregularities, in a vast majority of instances, could not have rendered these means effectual to their exclusion in all. If we see, for example, some born deaf, others possessed of all their senses, some dying in infancy, others living to old age, some sound in mind, and others insane, we can see no rational ground for believing that the power, which was effective to secure the benefits of perfect organization, and a healthy constitution, to far the major part, was insufficient to extend them to every individual. Nothing more seems requisite, than to allow the salutary laws, whether corporeal or mental, to take their natural course. The very intrusion of an obstruction, presents a phenomenon which we should not anticipate, and which we find it difficult to explain. The natural conclusion then seems to be, that the power and wisdom, which established the general

rule, was sufficient also to exclude the exceptions.

2dly. This conclusion is strengthened by the consideration, that nothing can be conceived, as limiting the perfections of an Eternal and Self-existent Being. If such limitation were possible, it must arise either from the imperfection of his own nature, or from the opposition of some external power. The former alternative must be dismissed as absurd. The supposition would involve a contradiction, inasmuch as it would imply that perfection may exist, and yet not belong to the only being in whom it can exist. Can it be limited by any power external to Himself? Is not the universe His creation, and every existing law, moral and physical, of His appointment? Is there a single relation subsisting between one particle of matter and another, which is not of His ordination? Does it possess a single property, which He did not give it, and which He cannot govern or control? Can the materials which He created become refractory to His will? Are we to believe the absurdity of two self-existent, and therefore

independent, Beings, and yet the one in any degree dependent on the other, if not for its substance, for its forms and modifications? This would be a contradiction. Every self-existent being must be independent, not only for its substance, but also for its condition. Matter, then, cannot be self-existent and independent; and as these attributes must belong to the Supreme Author of all things, His power cannot be limited by any external cause.

We ask next, can the operation of laws ordained by Himself escape His knowledge? The affirmative would imply that imperfection may exist, where imperfection is impossible. To establish laws, whose operation, in their most remote effects, He did not foresee, and could, therefore, not control, would be an argument not even of that wisdom which belongs to man, but of ignorance, temerity, and folly. The meanest artisan, when he detects any error or defect in his work, applies himself to its correction, and provides against it for the future. And is the great Author of the universe incapable of directing and controlling the creations of His own

hand? Can there be any thing, not implying a contradiction, which His power cannot effect? What is there, which His intelligence did not ordain, and with which, therefore, He is not acquainted? When we contemplate, indeed, the immensity of creation, worlds, and systems of worlds, extending through infinite space, all moved and regulated by the power and wisdom, which created them, we cannot but conceive of these attributes, as absolutely infinite. To suppose them inadequate to the exclusion or the correction of the anomalies, and evils, in our little planet, a mere particle in the universe, seems absurd and ridiculous. His power meets no resistance; every created being is subject to His authority, and obedient to His will; while His wisdom extends to a perfect knowledge of every cause and every effect, every relation and every change, all originating in His own ordination. We cannot, therefore, believe, that there are any irregularities, or evils, as they appear to us, which His wisdom and power are incapable of excluding.

To suppose, indeed, that the Deity possesses not the power to exclude evil, is either to imagine some other self-existent being, partly subject to His government, and partly superior to His control; or to suppose, that he gave existence to matter, and communicated to it qualities, which partly baffle the purposes of its creator, on whose will the very existence of these qualities depends. Each of these alternatives is absurd. A superior in any respect to the Supreme Being is a contradiction; and either a self-existent Being, or qualities, partly dependent and partly independent, are equally a contradiction. To suppose that no power and wisdom exist, by which evil can be excluded, is to presume the existence of an eternal evil principle, a doctrine which experience cannot prove, and which reason rejects.

If these observations are well founded, it follows, that the irregularities and evils in our system cannot be attributed to a defect either of wisdom or of power in a Being, in the immensity of whose works the whole of our system vanishes into no-

thing, and every atom of which is the creation of His hand, and obedient to His authority.

Let us now enquire, 2dly, Whether it is owing to a defect of goodness, that the evils of our condition are not excluded. This hypothesis is equally incredible. While Paley conceded, that some of the evils, which we suffer, may be ascribable to a defect of contrivance in the Divine Being, Bolingbroke attributed them to a deficiency in benevolence. That the Deity is not a purely malevolent Being is a truth, requiring no other proof, than the great preponderance of happiness. Pure malignity accompanied with knowledge, and resistless power, would produce universal and uninterrupted misery. What is our condition? That man, as a species, with the various tribes of inferior animals, enjoy far more than they suffer, is a truth, which scepticism itself will not venture to dispute. The Divine Being, therefore, is not purely malevolent. Is His character then of a mixed nature, partaking of the two contrary attributes, goodness and malignity? Are existing evils to be ascribed to a de-

fect in His benevolence? This seems a highly improbable conclusion. We are subject to many sufferings, which, it would argue extreme ignorance to suppose, that the perfections of Deity were incapable of excluding. It is, for example, a law of our nature, that we shall be born in a state of helpless infancy, dependent on others for sustenance and protection; yet surely no one, who surveys the stupendous works of nature, would ascribe this condition of our first existence to a defect, either of wisdom, or of power. Nor can it be imputed to a defect of benevolence, for, if this were the cause, the Author of our being would not have granted to manhood, what He denied to infancy. Can it be supposed, that the same wisdom, the same power, and the same benevolence by which man was originally formed perfect, do not still continue to exist? If our liability to disease were the effect of the imperfect benevolence of our Maker, it seems difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile this supposition with the fact, that He has provided in our constitution, the means of cure. The same observation is applicable

to most, if not all, of our other evils. We dismiss, then, the notion, as improbable in the extreme, that existing evils can be rationally attributed to a defect in the Divine benevolence. But, strong as the contrary presumption is, our doctrine rests not on the ground of merely high probability. It claims our assent as a metaphysical truth. We have resistless evidence to prove that the Deity is purely benevolent; and that His goodness is absolutely infinite. The arguments, by which this truth is evinced, may be briefly stated thus:—

1st. Malevolence, in whatever degree combined with its contrary, is an evidence of weakness and imperfection. It arises, as has been already observed, from a hatred of superiority, a sense of injury, a feeling of jealousy, or the spirit of revenge, passions and sentiments which cannot, without absurdity, be supposed to exist in the nature of a self-existent and independent Being. In the Divine mind, therefore, malignity can have no place.

2dly. We can conceive pure benevolence. We can conceive it, as existing

in exalted created natures; nay, perhaps, we do not err, when we believe, that it may be found in some human minds. But, if it can belong to man, or any superior created intelligence, is it not egregiously absurd to suppose, that it does not reside in the Author of all good, the Fountain of this and every other excellence? Would not this be a gross contradiction? This perhaps may appear more clearly from the following consideration.

3dly. Pure benevolence is either impossible, or it constitutes an attribute in the Divine nature. The former alternative cannot be maintained, for its possibility implies no contradiction; and the latter necessarily follows. For to assert a possibility, is to admit a power, in or by which it either is, or may be, a reality. But it is self-evident, that, if it does not exist in the Deity, as a reality, it never can become a reality, and thus the possibility becomes impossible; which is absurd. No truth can be more evident, than that the First Cause of all things must be absolutely perfect. This position we must admit, or embrace the contradiction, that perfection is

possible, and yet impossible. This argument is invincible and conclusive.

4thly. The great Original of all being must be self-existent and independent. Infinity belongs to Him, as existing from eternity. But to suppose a being to be infinite in one attribute, and finite in another, is to suppose a contradiction. Two such contrarieties cannot possibly co-exist in the same character. They are mutually irreconcileable. Every attribute in an Eternal and Independent Being must be infinite—unlimited by any external power, He being independent; and equally unlimited by His own essential nature,—perfection excluding the possibility of any collision of mutually repugnant principles. The conclusion is, that we must either admit the co-existence of two contrarieties, finitude and infinitude, in a perfect being, which notion involves an absurdity; or we must allow the infinitude of the Divine benevolence, and also of every other attribute in the Divine nature.

Thus it clearly appears, by evidence amounting to demonstration, that the per-

fections of the Deity must be infinite; nor is it possible to controvert this truth, and escape a palpable contradiction. And, if this doctrine is established by clear and conclusive evidence, no difficulties, with which it can be accompanied, should weaken our faith, or shake our conviction of its absolute certainty. No science is free from similar embarrassments. Every department in philosophy presents to us propositions, which command our assent, but which we find it impossible mutually to reconcile*. It

* That all lines not parallel, if indefinitely produced, must ultimately meet, seems a self-evident proposition; yet it is demonstrable, that some lines not parallel will never meet. We must either believe substance to be something distinct from its qualities, whence it follows, that it may have a separate existence, but a substance void of qualities is a contradiction; or we must believe, that a substance has no distinct existence, but is merely a group of qualities, and then we have qualities without a substance, which is equally a contradiction. If we assent to the doctrine of philosophical liberty, we maintain a contradiction; if we adopt the hypothesis of philosophical necessity, we involve ourselves in difficulties, which no ingenuity can remove. We must either believe atoms to be indivisible, though extended, and therefore divisible, which is a contradiction; or we must believe

surely then ought to excite no surprise, if in Theology, the most profound, as it is the most interesting, of all sciences, embracing the existence and attributes of an Infinite and Self-existent Being, we meet with difficulties to perplex, and mysteries to confound us. To suppose that a finite creature can comprehend the nature, the counsels and the operations of an infinite Being, is to presume an impossibility. Difficulties therefore we must expect to encounter; they are inseparable from the subject, as contemplated, not by man only, but by every created being. That our system exhibits innumerable facts to attest the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of the Deity is undeniable; but from its character, chequered with good and

matter to be divisible without limit, whence it follows, that there are no primary particles, and that matter is composed of nothings. This is equally a contradiction. That a finite quantity, by infinite additions, must become equal to another finite quantity, seems a self-evident truth; and yet it is demonstrable, that a given number may be increased *ad infinitum*, and yet never equal another though exceeding the former only by unity. It would be easy, were it necessary, to adduce more examples.

evil, we should not be led to infer that He possesses these attributes in an infinite degree. Nor would the entire absence of evil lead to this conclusion. The notion of infinitude is not acquired by experience; it is a conception purely intellectual, formed by the mind itself. It is of importance here also to observe, that not only is the knowledge communicated by reason, superior in excellence to that derived from external sense, but also that the truths, which our senses or our experience would incline us to limit, our reason irresistibly urges us to extend. From sense we should conclude, that space is bounded, for we perceive nothing but place or distance; but by reason, and reflection if not intuitively, as some metaphysicians maintain, we are taught, that space must be infinite. From memory and consciousness we acquire a notion of time; reason leads us to a conviction of eternity. The testimony of sense, after repeated trials, may induce the belief, that the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle *are* equal; but reason proceeds farther, and demonstrates, that they *must be* equal. In like manner,

the phenomena furnish evidence of the power, the wisdom, and the benevolence, of Deity; reason impresses the conviction, that, in a Being eternal and independent, these attributes can have no limit. The infinitude of these perfections is a truth, which, like the infinitude of space and duration, compels our belief by irresistible metaphysical evidence, from which it is impossible to withhold our assent, without maintaining an obvious contradiction.

To conclude: the humble and truly philosophic Theist, contemplating the immensity of the works of God, and conscious of his utter incapacity to penetrate into the counsels of Eternal Wisdom, when he surveys the condition in which he is placed, will thus reason with himself:

In the phenomena of the universe I discover the grandest and most impressive evidences of stupendous power; and in that system, to which I belong, I behold the most astonishing adjustments of causes and effects. In every thing around me, I perceive such congruities of relation, and such complicated concurrences of means, to useful and salutary ends, as no unintelligent agency can possibly explain. I

therefore infer power, wisdom, and benevolence in the Cause. Nor can I draw any other conclusion, without abandoning the principles, on which all my reasonings are founded, and from which all my deductions proceed in the investigation of causes, in matters of fact. Amidst a vast preponderance of good, and an immense balance of order and regularity, I perceive, also, evil and apparent accident. This chequered state of things would lead me to limit the power, or the wisdom, or the goodness of the Cause. But, as it would be an egregious error to estimate the entire nature of any cause, by examining only a part of its effect, so, I can form no correct conception of the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator from an experience, which, in respect to time, is as a point to eternity, and which does not extend beyond an atom in the universe. And, as it would be absurd to suppose a finite and dependent being to have infinite perfections, I feel it equally absurd to suppose an eternal, or infinite and independent Being to have finite perfections. Nor can I admit the contradiction, that a possible perfection is yet impossible—that it may exist, yet ex-

ists not in the Being, in whom alone it can exist. In this dilemma then I feel myself placed. I must either believe, in opposition to appearances, that the attributes of the Divine Being are infinite, or I must believe absurdities and assent to contradictions. Can I hesitate, which alternative to prefer; or rather, I should say, can the constitution of my mind, and the unalterable laws of human belief permit me to choose? Whatever difficulties embarrass the one alternative, I cannot embrace the other. Man is susceptible of pain, and subject to evil. It seems to be the will of his Maker, that it should be so. Why evil of any kind should be ordained, or permitted to enter into the scheme of the Divine economy, is to my finite understanding incomprehensible. But I can no more be persuaded, that malevolence is an attribute of the Divine nature, than I can believe, contrary to all experience, that the life of every sentient being is an uninterrupted series of pain and suffering. I can no more question the goodness of Deity, than I can doubt of the enjoyment, which I derive from the pleasures of sense, the

gratifications of appetite, the beauties and sublimities of nature, the social affections, the acquisition of knowledge, and the delight arising from the cultivation of pious feelings, and virtuous habits. And, if I repose confidence in the goodness and discretion of a wise and virtuous friend, even when I cannot reconcile his procedure with my notions of right and wrong, surely I cannot consistently withhold that confidence from the Wisest and Best of all beings.

In this manner he will reason with himself; and, if he beholds evils or defects, as he apprehends them, beholding at the same time an immense preponderance of good, and satisfied that malevolence, ignorance, or impotency are incompatible with the nature of an Eternal and Independent Being, he will regard every evil as an ordination for good, and ultimately to issue in higher enjoyment.

Where infinity is the subject, we are necessarily bewildered: but without perplexing ourselves with discussions, respecting the compatibility of evil with the infinitude of the Divine attributes, discussions, to

which our limited faculties are wholly unequal, every reasonable man will feel his happiness sufficiently secured in the perfections of Deity, the source of all excellence, the most powerful, and, at the same time, the wisest and best of all beings. The orbs, that fly with inconceivable velocity through the regions of space, proclaim His power; the manifold adaptation of means to ends, in this our lower system, displays His wisdom; and we ourselves, with the sentient creation around us, exhibit evidences of His goodness. Our enjoyments are numberless, our sufferings comparatively few. —Why the latter are not wholly excluded, or why an equal degree of happiness is not produced without the medium of evil, is a question, which we vainly essay to solve. Under the charge, however, of incomprehensible wisdom, inconceivable power, and unchangeable goodness, we need entertain no apprehensions, that our happiness will not be effectually consulted. God is powerful, wise, and benevolent. Here then let us confidently rest, submitting, with due humility, our weak reason to the counsels of Eternal and Unerring wisdom.

ESSAY II.

ON

PROVIDENCE.

CHAPTER I.

SECTION I.

"Nulli est naturæ obediens aut subjectus Deus; omnem ergo regit ipse naturam."—CIC. DE NAT. DEOR. lib. ii.

"Αλλ' ουδεν ταχ' αν ισως ειη χαλεπον ενδειξασθαι τουτο γε, ὡς επιμελεις σμικρων εισι θεοι ουχ' ἡττον, η των μεγεθει διαφεροντων."—PLATO, DIAL. 10 DE LEGIBUS.

To know, that we are the creatures of a wise, powerful, and benevolent Being, is to know the excellence of our origin, and to feel the dignity of our nature. Firmly persuaded that he is the offspring of an Almighty Parent, the Creator and Ruler of all worlds, man is exalted in his own estimation. Disdaining the debasing hypothesis, by which the Atheist would degrade him, and referring his existence to a higher

source than earth, he soars above this lower sphere, where his Maker has placed him, and exults in his relation to the Eternal Being, whose dominion is the universe, and whose habitation is the immensity of space.

But is it enough to know, that there does exist a Supreme Being, and that we are the creatures of His hand? Does it suffice to be convinced, that we are not the offspring of chance, or the products of necessity, but derive our existence from an Intelligent Power, by whom the heavens and the earth were made? No; this conviction, though of superlative importance, is not sufficient. —It would be a sorry consolation to the houseless beggar, wandering in our streets, perishing with hunger, shivering in rags, and wasted by disease, to be assured, that he was the son of an opulent and mighty potentate, at whose table he should be fed with every luxury, and whose splendid roof should shelter him from winter's stormy blast, but who had abandoned him to chance and the world's compassion at the moment of his birth. The intelligence would only serve to aggravate his sufferings.

"We should think ourselves miserable," says a late able divine, "if we found ourselves in a barren wilderness, without a morsel of bread, without a drop of water, with no arm, but our own to protect us, from the beasts of prey howling around us. We should think ourselves wretched, if we should find ourselves in a leaky vessel, on a tempestuous ocean, at a distance from land, without a pilot, without a helm, the sport of winds and waves. Wretched and hopeless as our situation would then be, this world, without a Providence, would be a far drearier wilderness, a far more tempestuous ocean." *

That there is a Supreme Power, to whom we owe our existence, is indeed the most momentous, as it is the foundation, of all religious truths; but a question, evidently not less interesting to our happiness, next presents itself, a question, to which no man can be indifferent, who has a mind to reflect, a soul to animate, or a heart to feel. The question is, Does the Almighty Being, who called the universe into existence, conde-

* See Gerard's Sermons.

scend to superintend the affairs of men? Is the hand, which at first created us, still employed in our protection? Are we left to our own guidance, or are we continually under the direction and care of Infinite power, Unerring wisdom, and Unchangeable goodness? In a word, is there a Providence, that superintends and governs the concerns of men? This is the important enquiry, which now demands our attention.

Were we to contemplate only the majesty of the Divine Being, as contrasted with the insignificance of man, in the immensity of the works of God—were we to reflect, that not merely the diurnal sphere, on which we live, but even the whole planetary system, is lost in the boundless universe, we should be prompted irresistibly to exclaim, "What is man, that the Deity should be mindful of him, or the son of man, that He should deign to regard him!" We find, accordingly, that many of the sages of antiquity, impressed with a profound sense of the transcendent dignity of the Divine nature, and of the comparative nothingness of the human race, conceived it a de-

rogation to the majesty of the Supreme Creator of the universe, to suppose, that He would stoop to regard the humble concerns of this terrestrial sphere. Impressed with this reverential apprehension of the Divine Being, they believed, that He secluded himself in the solitude and tranquillity of extramundane space, enjoying the beatitude of His own nature, feeling no interest in the affairs of man, and exercising no providence over the works of His own hands. In a mind humbled, under a profound conviction of the Supreme majesty of God, the eternity of His existence, and the inconceivable dignity of His nature, as contrasted with the littleness,—the insignificance of man, such a sentiment is far from being unnatural. But this notion of the Divinity, though originating in reverential and exalted conceptions of His attributes, is, in fact, derogatory to his transcendent excellence. It assimilates Him to some human potentate, wholly occupied in his own individual enjoyment, and secluding himself from the concerns of his people, as either too contemptible to engage his attention, or as requiring exer-

tions too laborious for him to undertake. Moreover it would imply an inconsistency, highly injurious to the character of the Supreme Being, to suppose, that He could feel it degrading to his dignity, (if I may so express myself, in accommodation to human conception,) to preserve those, whom He did not disdain to call into existence. What it was not beneath the majesty of His nature to create, it cannot derogate from His majesty to preserve. To measure the perfections of Deity by our apprehensions, or to erect our petty and vain notions of human grandeur into a standard of dignity, would be, indeed, a combination of ignorance and conceit,—vanity and presumption. But we cannot possibly err in believing, that, if it would detract from the majesty of the Divine Being to exercise a providence over the concerns of man, or any creature of His hand, it would have been equally derogatory to His dignity to call him into existence. The act, therefore, of creating man, is a sufficient evidence, that he is an object, not unworthy of his Maker's care. This argument alone, by removing the objection, suffices to evince

the existence of a Providence. But let us proceed:

The subject of enquiry has been generally considered, as involving one or other of these three hypotheses; either that the world is governed by fate, or that its concerns are left to chance, or that it is ruled by an Intelligent Power.

Having proved that there exists a Supreme Being, the Creator of the universe, we deem it unnecessary to occupy the reader's attention in exposing the falsit of the first hypothesis. One observatio we trust, will suffice.

Fate, unless denoting what its etymology implies, the decrees of Supreme Intelligence and Power, is nothing else than a brute necessity. If then it has been satisfactorily shewn, that we have no evidence, that active properties essentially belong to matter, and that, even if they did belong to it, they could not possibly account for the original formation of a sentient and intelligent being, no possible modification of elementary atoms being adequate to its production, we surely can have no rational ground for believing, that necessity can go-

vern and sustain, what it was incapable of producing. If intelligence was necessary to form, the conclusion is morally certain, that intelligence, whether mediately or immediately, is necessary to preserve.

Is the world, then, governed by chance? The same observation is applicable here. If it has been proved, that chance could not produce, it follows, that chance cannot regulate and support. The acknowledged rules of probability, as established on mathematical principles, exclude this hypothesis as false and incredible. We would ask, if it be by chance, that the Atheist hears and sees—that he breathes, lives, and moves. Is it by chance, that he exercises his mental powers, and directs his researches in the fields of science? Is it by chance, that he discovers, that the world was made by chance? He will not believe, that a brute necessity, or a random chance, can govern the affairs of an empire, or even the concerns of a family; yet he can believe, that the complicated and mighty interests of an universe may be adjusted, and governed without intelligence. This certainly seems to be the opinion of a blind

fatality—not to say, a lamentable fatuity. If the world then be not governed either by fate, or by necessity, or by chance, it must be ruled by Intelligence and Wisdom. But let us examine the positive and direct proofs by which this important religious truth is established:

1st, The benevolence of the Deity, as displayed in the constitution of nature, furnishes alone a sufficient ground for believing, that there exists a wise and superintending Providence. It would be entirely irreconcileable with the goodness of the great Parent of all animated being, to suppose, that He would call a world of creatures into existence, susceptible of enjoyment, but subject also to suffering, and immediately abandon them to their own uncertain guidance, or to the contingencies of chance. The presumption is, that He would either make a provision for their happiness in the constitution of their nature, and of that world, in which He had placed them, or that His continual superintending care would watch over their concerns. If a human parent would be reprobated, who, though capable of providing

for the wants of his child, should throw the infant, at its birth, on the mercy of the world, instead of sheltering it in his bosom, and nursing it with tenderness, can we, consistently with the Divine goodness everywhere conspicuous around us, impute to the Deity that indifference to his offspring, which we should condemn with indignation in a human being? Could we reconcile it with our notions of benevolence, were we to believe that He is regardless of the meanest creature, as unworthy of His regard, though created by His hand, and dependent on Him for its protection? Does not the mother, with instinctive fondness, nurse her little infant, while it requires her care? Does she not sacrifice her own repose, and her own pleasure, to secure its comfort, and to minister to its necessities? See her with maternal tenderness, watching its little wants, and returning its innocent smiles with complacent sympathy. Who implanted this instinctive affection? Who inspired this love for the fruit of her womb? Whence do we derive *our* benevolence? Who can communicate that which he does not possess? "He

who made the ear, shall He not hear? Or He who formed the eye, shall He not see?" Or are we to believe, that He who inspired into every parent an affection for his child, is himself devoid of the sentiment, which He has imparted, not to man only, but to every sentient and percipient being? "Can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb; yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."

Let it not be urged, that parental affection may be an acquired feeling, the result of education, or the effect of example. This argument might have weight, if it were founded in fact; but we have evidence to prove, as has been already shewn, that this affection obtains in cases, in which education and example have no place. Examine the brute creation; the love of offspring is conspicuous in all*. They provide for

* I have already adduced one or two instances of the instinctive affection of animals to their young; the reader, perhaps, will pardon me, if I here mention another striking example, taken from "Hogg's Shepherd's Calendar." "We had", says the writer, "one very hard winter, so that the sheep grew lean in the spring; and the *thwarter ill*, a sort of paralytic affection, came among

their progeny, until they can provide for themselves. Nay, do we not perceive animals, in other circumstances the most timid, exhibiting an intrepidity, and disregard of their own safety, truly astonishing, in defending their young against the attack of an enemy? When this instinct ceases to be necessary, it ceases to exist. How powerfully does this affection in the brute creation, evince the wisdom and goodness of a superintending Providence? The great Parent of the universe, from whose inspiration proceeds the instinctive affection of every secondary parent, cannot be regardless of the creatures of His hand. We have in His benevolence, then, a sufficient security, that our concerns are not overlooked by the Being who made us. To suppose that Goodness Unchangeable

them, and carried off a number. Often have I seen the poor victims, when fallen down to rise no more, and when unable to lift their heads from the ground, holding up the leg, to invite the starving lamb to the miserable pittance, that the udder could still supply." How interesting to our kindest feelings is this little anecdote!—How affecting the solicitude of the mother, for the nourishment of her lamb, even in the article of death! How absurd to suppose, that the Author of this instinctive tenderness should be regardless of his creatures.

could prompt to create, and yet neglect to preserve, would be to suppose a contradiction. And the very existence of that instinct which impels every animal to foster its young, until they are capable of providing for themselves, inasmuch as this instinct is ascribable to His ordination, furnishes a conclusive evidence, that He makes provision for their preservation, and attends to their necessities. It is the essence of benevolence to delight in doing good, and diffusing happiness, as far as its capacities extend. We must either, therefore, deny the goodness of Deity, in opposition to invincible evidence, or we must admit the existence of a superintending Providence.

SECTION II.

Is the Providence of Deity universal, or only general?

If we have reason, then, to believe, that He who made the world is also its Preserver and Governor, the next question is, what is the nature and extent of that Providence, which the Deity exercises over the affairs of men? Is it a general Providence, embracing only the more important concerns of the

universe; or is it a particular or universal Providence, extending even to the most minute event? Is it a Providence, acting by general laws, established at the creation of our globe, and intended to operate, without His interposition, as long as its Author designed the system to last, as a clock or a watch is made to move for a certain number of hours without the direction of its maker; or is it the constant superintendence of Deity—that Providence in which the Christian believes, and without which "not even a sparrow, or a hair of the head, falls to the ground"? These have been, and still continue to be, questions which naturally present themselves on this interesting subject.

It has been the opinion of several distinguished philosophers and theologians, that the Providence, which the Deity exercises over the affairs of man, is not particular, but general; that it is the continued agency of general laws, established at the creation; and that it does not extend to minor events, but embraces only the more important concerns of human life, providing for the species, but not for indivi-

duals. They believe that these laws, being left to their own operation, occasionally clash one with another, producing effects contrary to the ordinary course of nature, and in apparent repugnance to the intention of its Author. Hence, it is said, arise the various deviations from the general rule, which we perceive in vegetable and animal productions; hence the various anomalies and incongruities, which we observe in the physical world especially. Is it possible, they ask, to reconcile these irregularities, and these apparent frustrations of the general intentions of Deity, with the belief of a constant and particular superintending Providence?

This doctrine, while it professes to consult the dignity of the Supreme Being, is as injurious to His character, as it is inconsolatory to man, "born as he is to trouble as the sparks fly upward." It may be pronounced to be no less false, than it is gloomy and disheartening. If the Providential care of the Deity were confined to great and important concerns, and if the happiness of the humblest individual were overlooked, justly might the children

of obscurity and suffering arraign the benevolence of the Being, who called them into existence. To them this general Providence, of whose protection they had no share, might be a subject of complaint, but could never be a source of consolation. Justly might they murmur, that a general Providence, which overlooked their humble concerns, was to them no Providence. But the doctrine is at once irrational, and degrading to Deity.

In the first place, it may be observed, that, to suppose the Providence of God to overlook the condition of any created being, how low soever may be its rank in the scale of existence, is perversely to arraign the consistency of the Deity, and to maintain two doctrines, mutually repugnant, and utterly irreconcileable. Do we believe, that "He who made the king, made the beggar also"? Do we believe, that the worm, the caterpillar, and the emmet, were formed by His wisdom, and animated by His power? Is it then consistent with this conviction, or with these attributes of the Divinity, to believe, that He would exert His wisdom and power in

the production of beings, to whose preservation He was wholly indifferent? Did He create in wisdom, what He was to abandon to chance? Did He will even a worm to exist, and was yet regardless of its existence? Can we rationally affirm such a contradiction? Wisdom cannot act in folly, or Benevolence forsake what it prompted to create.

In the second place, it may be observed, that, if the Providence of God did not embrace every event, how unimportant soever it may appear to us, His Providence would be imperfect. But imperfection cannot be imputed to Deity. A self-existent Being must unite in Himself every conceivable excellence, every possible perfection; to deny this position is to maintain a contradiction. His Providence must then be commensurate with His perfections; and, consisting in the exercise of these attributes, must extend to every corner of the Universe, regulating the movements of even every atom of matter. To dispute the universality of His Providence, is to limit Him as a finite being to a part of His own creation. It is to ar-

raign His goodness, to deny His omniscience, or to question His Almighty power. Possessing every possible perfection in the highest possible degree, His knowledge is omniscience. But we should rob Him of this attribute, were we to affirm, that events take place in His creation, to which He himself is a stranger. We should degrade Him below the rank of a common human machinist, were we to suppose, that He established at the Creation certain laws for the government of the Universe, the most remote and the most minute consequences of which He did not foreknow. The machinist, when he completes his plan, foresees the effect of every wheel, every pinion, every joint, every spring of his machine, and can trace, in his own mind, every movement from the commencement of the series to the ultimate effect. And can we suppose, that the Deity constructed our system with less foresight than a human artisan would exercise? Or can we believe, that any event, however minute, can take place in His creation, the causes and consequences of which His prescience did not embrace?

It would be equally an impeachment of His benevolence to suppose, that He would have created any sentient being, even the worm or the ant, whose condition, during its brief existence, whether of enjoyment or of suffering, was to Him a matter of indifference, or unconcern. Do not the common feelings of humanity inspire us with an interest in the safety and happiness of every human being? And shall man arrogate a virtue, which he denies to his Maker? Shall he dare to boast a superiority over the Being, who made him? What has he, which he has not received? To confine the Providence of Deity then to what are deemed important events, or merely to the general concerns of mankind, is to rob Him of his omniscience, to impeach His benevolence, and to exclude Him from part of His own creation. Can any person consistently maintain this doctrine, and at the same time believe, that all things past, present, and future, are open to the eye of God? Man, by memory, recalls the past, while he knows the present, and by the aid of experience sees a little into futurity. But we should bear in

mind, that, when we speak of the prescience of the Deity, we employ a term in accommodation to human faculties and human conception; and that His knowledge of all that has been, is, or can be, is immediate and intuitive.

There have been some philosophers, who have presumed to deny the omniscience of the Divine Being, rather than admit that the human will, like every other faculty, whether corporeal or mental, is governed by determinate laws, the ordination of its Author. A doctrine so monstrous,—so derogatory to the perfections of the Divine Being, we reject with indignation. Is the Infinite knowledge of Deity to be questioned, because vain man thinks himself wise?

It may be observed, further, that from events, in themselves apparently insignificant, result effects of the highest importance. This is a truth, which it would be easy to evince by innumerable proofs, were either argument or illustration necessary to establish its certainty. History supplies abundant evidence, that on occurrences the most trivial has been suspended

the fate of empires, of religion, and of science. The fall of an apple is an event as little interesting, as can well be imagined; but this simple phenomenon suggested a train of thought, which terminated in the institution of a theory, the most splendid, that ever emanated from human genius. It was a circumstance in itself of little or no importance, that formed one of the first links of a chain of causes, by which an individual, comparatively obscure, was elevated to imperial dignity, compelling almost every monarch in Europe to bow before him. It was simply the sight of a fig, shewn in the Senate house at Rome, as Pliny tells us, that occasioned the destruction of Carthage. "*Quod non Trebia, nec Trasymenus, non Cannæ busto insignes Romani nominis perficere potuere, non castra Punica ad tertium lapidem vallata, portæ Collinæ adequitans ipse Hannibal.*" There is no occurrence so minute, and in itself so insignificant, which may not lead to a train of consequences of superlative moment. A long series of causes and effects may indeed intervene; but on this trivial circumstance may hang events, on

which the fate of empires, and the happiness of millions, may ultimately turn. He, whose memory enables him to retrace any series of occurrences in the history of his own life, or who carefully notes causes and effects, as they daily arise, needs not to be informed, that we are too prone to disregard, as wholly unworthy of our attention, little incidents, which constitute, notwithstanding their seeming insignificance, important links in that chain of circumstances, which ultimately lead to prosperity or adversity, health or disease, enjoyment or suffering. The whole of human life is a concatenation of circumstances, some singly trivial, and others important, not one of which, however, not even the most minute, can be excluded, without affecting the subsequent series. A particle of matter, on the surface of our globe, may seem contemptible and of no moment; but that particle, small as it is, adds to the Earth's gravity; nor could it be annihilated without producing a change, though imperceptible to us, not only in the planetary system, but through the material universe. It is our ignorance and our inattention, that

seduce us into the belief, that minor events are insignificant, and unworthy of the attention of Deity.

The doctrine then of a general Providence, embracing only what we deem important events, must be rejected for the following reasons: 1st, It arraigns the consistency of Deity, by representing Him as producing what He cares not to preserve. 2dly, It impeaches His omniscience, exhibiting Him as ignorant of many events passing in His own creation, and giving birth to laws, the effects of which He Himself did not entirely foresee. 3dly, It arraigns His benevolence, as calling beings into existence, whose condition here is dependent on events, which He wants either the power or the inclination to control. 4thly, Those who urge it, proceed on the erroneous presumption, that, because an occurrence may be insignificant in itself, it is unimportant in its consequences; forgetful, that trivial circumstances may be, and often are, either immediately or remotely productive of effects, in which our happiness or our misery may be deeply involved.

The advocates of this doctrine, perceiving the force of the objections, to which it is liable, have represented the Deity, though generally leaving the laws, which He established, to their own operation, for the regulation of the higher interests of the universe, yet occasionally interposing by a particular providence, and exerting a special and immediate influence over the physical and moral concerns of man. He is represented as coming forward, in certain emergencies, to avert impending evils, to rescue from imminent dangers, and to deliver from the pressure of disease, calamity, and sorrow. The idea of such interpositions appears to me derogatory to the moral attributes of God. It is to refer the evil and the danger to one cause, and the deliverance to another. It is to represent the Divine Being, as but partially the governor of His own creation. Does not the same voice, which allays the winds, and calms the tempest, command them also to arise? Does evil intrude itself without the knowledge of Deity; and does He interpose to remedy it, when He discovers where it exists? Does He resemble a hu-

man artisan, obliged to rectify errors, which He was incapable of forseeing, and, therefore, unable to prevent? Or is He to be likened to Baal, sometimes pursuing, or talking, or on a journey, or asleep, and then waking, or returning to the inspection of a neglected world? Surely, surely, such a notion as this is as irrational in itself, as it is irreconcileable with the perfections of the Supreme Ruler of the universe. To an Omniscient eye, comprehending all causes and all effects, no unforeseen emergency can arise, requiring such interferences, as man by his ignorance is compelled to resort to, in the management of his concerns. The interpositions, then, of Deity, if we employ the term, in accommodation to human conception, must not be understood, as averting dangers, or correcting evils, which He did not foresee, but constituting a part of the universal plan of the Divine government, existing from eternity in the Divine mind. The good and the evil, the danger and the escape, the disease and the cure, have one and the same origin. They are equally the ordinations of that Omniscient and Benevolent

Being, by whom all causes operate, to whom all events are known, and to whose wise and good purposes all changes are subservient.

Rejecting, then, the doctrine of a general, as opposed to a particular providence, some pious philosophers and theologians have maintained, that the Deity is the sole agent in nature,—that, though He employs the instrumentality of secondary causes, every event is the immediate ordination of His will,—that the affairs of the universe are every moment under His direction,—and that the wreck of a world, and the fall of a sparrow, are equally the effects of His continual and immediate agency. To suppose that the Supreme Being, after the creation of the universe, committed it to the operation of general laws, which should embrace only its more important concerns, and operate for the period fixed by His decree, as a machinist constructs a machine to move for a given time, they conceive to be a doctrine as inconsolatory to man, as it is dishonourable to Deity.

It is objected, however, that to believe

in the continual and immediate agency of the Great Ruler of the world, is to derogate from the dignity of His nature, by representing Him in the character of a human agent, reduced to the necessity of constantly superintending the interests of the universe, and assiduously busied in managing the works of His own hands, rectifying errors, or preventing their occurrence.

This objection betrays false and dishonourable apprehensions of the nature and attributes of the Divine Being. In all our conceptions of Deity, we are too prone to liken His nature to our own, and to ascribe to Him such ideas of ease, dignity, and greatness, as we entertain ourselves. Our powers are limited, and weak; continued exertions exhaust our strength; labour fatigues us, and we require repose. Proud man, also, is too prone to consider the care of his inferiors, unless it flatter His ambition, as degrading to His dignity *. But

* This was the opinion of Aristotle, and some other ancient sages. Because he conceived it a degradation, that King Xerxes should execute mean or inferior offices himself, he deemed it more decorous for the Supreme Majes-

let us not presume to measure the perfections of Deity by the standard of our narrow faculties, or impute to Him our false notions of dignity and greatness. The energies of Omnipotence cannot be exhausted; to accomplish its purposes, it is only necessary to will them; the eye of Omniscience is neither liable to error, nor requires repose; and true dignity consists not in indulging habits of indolence and seclusion, but in a superiority to every selfish and base feeling, every prideful sentiment, and every sordid passion; in studiously consulting the happiness of others by the kindly offices of sympathy and benevolence. Those, who conceive the Deity to be liable to distraction, by a superintendence of the universe, as was the irrational opinion of some ancient philosophers, must believe that the attributes of the Eternal Being resemble in degree the puny and imperfect faculties of

ty of Heaven to execute His will by inferior agents. *Ειπερ ασεμνον ην αυτον δοκειν Ξερξην αυτουργειν ἁπαντα, και διατελειν ἁ βουλοιτο, και εφισταμενον διοικειν, πολυ μαλλον απρεπες αν ειη τῳ θεῳ.*

A similar conception is expressed and amplified in the "Desatir," or "Book of the Persian Prophets," a work, to which we have once before referred.

man. With equal truth might the ant or the emmet, if capable of thought, measure the extent of human vision, human intellect, or human power, by its own capacities, and its own perceptions.

SECTION III.

Cudworth's doctrine of a Plastic Nature examined.

THERE have been some eminent philosophers and divines, who, not distinguishing between *immediate* and *preternatural* agency, have contended, that to ascribe every event immediately to Divine Providence, is to convert every phenomenon into a miracle. "It seems not so agreeable to reason," says the learned and profound Cudworth, "that nature, as a distinct thing from the Deity, should be quite superseded, or made to signify nothing, God himself doing all things immediately and *miraculously*; from whence it would follow also, that they are all done either forcibly and violently, or else artificially only, and none of them by any inward

principle of their own." The author accordingly adopts the hypothesis of a certain *plastic nature*, as he terms it, or a vital, spiritual, and unintelligent agent, by whose energy he supposes, that the various phenomena of the world are produced. This hypothesis, with the arguments, by which the learned author has attempted its defence, we now proceed to examine. We shall previously, however, endeavour to clear it from the imputation of a noxious tendency, with which it has been charged, after submitting to the reader two observations, one of which is suggested by the preceding quotation.

1st, This hypothesis, as will afterwards appear, is adopted, in accommodation to the erroneous and absurd conception, that the Deity may be distracted, or his character degraded, by administering the multifarious and vast concerns of the universe. The notion, then, by which the doctrine is suggested, we reject, as highly dishonourable to the perfections of an Omnipotent and Omniscient Being. 2dly, The reason, which the author has here assigned for supporting the hypothesis, is founded in a false

and unphilosophical notion of a miracle. He assumes, that, whatever is done immediately by Deity, is done miraculously. The assumption is false. A *miracle* has been defined to be *a suspension, or a violation of a law of nature*, and clearly implies a preternatural effect, manifesting the interposition of a supernatural power*. Now,

* Dr. Price objects to this definition, as given by Hume. He contends, that the law is not suspended, and that, on the contrary, it continues to operate. He observes, that, when the waters divided, like a wall on each side, that the Israelites might pass through the Red Sea, the law of gravitation still acted; but that its usual effect was prevented by the interposition of a Superior Power. The learned author, however, seems to have attached to this observation more importance, than it can justly claim. Whether we say, that in every miracle the law is suspended, or that its operation is supernaturally counteracted, the extraordinary interposition of superior power is equally implied, and the question between the Christian and the Sceptic is nowise affected by either definition.

Mr. Hume, in the first edition of his Essay, broadly asserted, that "no testimony for any kind of miracle can ever possibly amount to a probability, much less to a proof." Perceiving, that he had involved himself in a manifest contradiction, he subsequently qualified his proposition, and confined his assertion to recorded miracles. Still, however, he is chargeable with egregious inconsistency. The truth seems to be, that believing as an Atheist, yet aware, that it would not answer his purpose to deny the

while the phenomena of nature proceed in their usual course, and effects follow causes, as we have uniformly experienced, how, with any propriety, can any event be represented as miraculous? The immediate agency of Deity implies no suspension—no violation of any established law. The phenomena of the universe may proceed with uninterrupted regularity, under His immediate ordination, as well as by the energy of any plastic nature, or necessary unintelligent agent. The position, therefore, of the learned author, that such a state of things would imply a miraculous administration of the universe, seems evidently founded in error. Nor is the term *artificial* more applicable to a system thus regulated, than if it were under the government of an unintelligent agent.

This doctrine has been severely reprobated, as tending to subvert the argument for Theism, drawn from the evidences of de-

possibility of a miracle, and to refer every event to an inflexible necessity, he has justly exposed himself to the charge of self-contradiction. He admits, that it is possible for a miracle to be proved by testimony, and yet, absurdly enough, would search for the cause of the miracle, in the laws of physical nature.

sign manifested in the universe, and thereby favouring the hypothesis of the Atheist. In this censure, founded, we conceive, in misconception and error, justice to its author forbids our concurrence. "It avails nothing," says Dr. Price, "to say, that this agent [a plastic nature] acts in subordination to Deity, and only in virtue of powers, given it by him. For it is not supposed to be merely an instrument in the hands of the Deity, which never acts, except in consequence of being first acted upon; but, what it does, it is supposed to do properly, by a power inherent in itself, without wanting any immediate direction; and the very reasons which have been assigned for supposing such an agent, are, that it is absurd to think, that the Deity should be continually employed so much in vain, as is necessary to be supposed, if the general laws of the world are derived from his agency; and that it is dishonouring him to conceive of him, as acting himself continually on matter, and immediately concerned in framing the bodies of the meanest plants and animals."

While we agree with Dr. Price in deny-

ing the hypothesis of a plastic nature, as necessary to the dignity of the Supreme Being, we cannot admit the validity of his reasoning, or the justness of his conclusion. Let it be granted, that a plastic nature supersedes the necessity of the immediate agency of Deity, it does not follow, nor is it maintained, that its powers and properties are strictly inherent, or independently its own; and if not its own, but derived from Deity, the operations of the plastic nature must be regarded, as resulting from his ordination. Every agent must be subordinate, whose power emanates from a superior being, and which cannot act, but in obedience to his original appointment, or immediate direction. And whether the instrument acts by the continued energy of the primary efficient cause, or by a power communicated to it, the effect must be referred to the principal agent.

"But," says Dr. Price, "a plastic nature is not supposed to be merely an instrument in the hands of the Deity, which never acts, except being acted upon; but what it does, it is supposed to do properly, by a power inherent in itself, without want-

ing any immediate direction." If, by *inherent*, the author means essential and underived, the hypothesis, which he impugns, implies no such conception. If the power inhere by communication, which is the doctrine of Cudworth, it may operate without any immediate direction of the being, who imparted it. Does not the spring of a watch act for some time by a communicated power, without the direction of the maker, or the assistance of its possessor? May not, then, the plastic nature, though it is supposed to operate without the immediate energy of Deity, act by a power, with which He has invested it? Dr. Price thinks otherwise. "It is to little purpose," he observes, "to say, that Omnipotence can give such a power to an unintelligent agent; for what has not wisdom cannot act wisely; and no power can make that to be, which cannot be." Does the author mean to deny, that Omnipotence can communicate a power to an unintelligent agent, to execute the designs of His wisdom, or the purposes of His will? This would indeed be a limitation of His power, against which every rational Theist would loudly

reclaim. And, if this be not his meaning, with what pertinence or consistency does he assert, that it is to little purpose to say, that Omnipotence can give such a power to an unintelligent agent? To grant this, or prove its possibility, is to grant or prove the possibility of Cudworth's hypothesis. But the author asserts, that it implies a contradiction, and the possibility is, therefore, without the range of even Omnipotence itself. On what ground does this assertion rest? He says, because "what has not wisdom cannot act wisely." But he misconceives the hypothesis, when he supposes that it either affirms, or implies, any such absurdity. The plastic nature may be unintelligent, and its effects, notwithstanding, be the productions of intelligence. Does the horse, the ox, or the dog, act wisely, when they unconsciously execute the designs of man? Do the muscular properties act wisely, when they move a leg or an arm? Or the vegetative powers, when they absorb and assimilate nutriment for the sustenance of the plant? Does the bee act wisely, when it constructs its cell? May not a plastic nature, supposing it to exist, act, not by

its own wisdom, but that of its Creator? It may act *by* wisdom, though it does not act wisely, or *with* wisdom.

"If the Deity," says Dr. Price, "can make a cause, that acts without knowledge or design, to produce regular effects, then it is in the nature of things possible for such a cause to produce such effects; then design in the cause is not necessary to the greatest conceivable order and regularity in the effect; nor can we certainly infer, the one from the other; then, in short, any thing may produce any thing, and no conclusion, with respect to the cause, can be drawn in any case from what we see in the effect." This reasoning, we conceive, will not bear one moment's examination. It is founded in error. In the first place, we would observe, that the author's proposition is purely identical, and amounts to nothing, when he states, that, if the Deity can make an unintelligent cause produce regular effects, "it is possible for such a cause to produce such effects;" for what is possible, must be possible. What the Deity causes to be done, must be done.

If the proposition be not identical, it is

manifestly false. For, if he intends to signify, that, if the Deity can make brute causes produce regular and beneficial effects, it would therefore follow, that these causes could of themselves, and without the ordination or aid of intelligent power, produce the same effects; we deny the conclusion, as illegitimate and inadmissible. And yet it would seem, that this must be the author's meaning, otherwise, his argument is foreign to the doctrine, which he opposes, as subverting all our reasoning in favour of Deity. His objection could be valid only on the supposition, that Cudworth's hypothesis maintained either directly, or by implication, that the powers of the plastic nature are underived, and essentially its own. By what argument then can it be proved, that, if an instrument, or any subordinate agent, as being invested with certain powers, can produce certain effects, it is "in the nature of things possible", for such an agent without these powers, to produce the same effects? Or how does it prove, that because design in the "immediate cause is not necessary to the greatest conceivable

order and regularity," it is not necessary in the primary cause, or not indispensable to the effects. To use a former illustration, the elasticity of a watch-spring, an unintelligent power of an unintelligent agent, produces the regular motion of the wheels; but would it be a just conclusion, that this power, whether communicated, or uncommunicated, supersedes the necessity of an intelligent artisan? or how would it follow, from the admission that the motion is produced by the elastic power of the spring, "that any thing may produce any thing."*

* Cudworth's doctrine was sharply attacked by the celebrated Bayle, as furnishing the atheist with an argument against the existence of Deity. He contended, that, if subordinate agents could execute such works without intelligence, the atheist might affirm, that the world might be constructed without wisdom or design. The conclusion is false. An able and complete vindication of Cudworth's doctrine, as affording no argument against the existence of Deity, was published by Le Clerc; and Bayle was compelled to acknowledge his error. Brutes, under the direction of man, are employed in the execution of works, of which they can have no conception. Whether the bee constructs its cell, the ant its storehouse, or the bird its nest, by intelligence, or with intelligence, is of no moment. By either hypothesis the main question is not

Dr. Price seems to have apprehended, that, if we admit a plastic nature, or an unintelligent agent, to be capable of producing the phenomena of the universe, we exclude the necessity of a Supreme Intelligence. In this opinion of the pious and learned writer we do not concur. The plastic nature, or the properties of matter, may be admitted to be the immediate cause; but if these are unintelligent, and if the phenomena evince intelligence, they cannot possibly be the ultimate or primary cause. It is surely an error to suppose, that intelligence cannot be inferred, unless it be manifested, as belonging to the immediate agent. The plastic nature then, though itself unintelligent, may execute the designs of an Intelligent Being. It

affected. If they execute these works without intelligence, it does not follow, that, because there is no wisdom in them, the works do not evince the existence of wisdom somewhere. If not in the bee, or the ant, or the bird, it must be the attribute of the cause, whence they mediately or immediately proceed. We see therefore, no absurdity, no dangerous tendency in the doctrine of Cudworth, though we cannot approve the ground, on which he has adopted it. Our reasons for rejecting it have been already stated.

may be an instrument, or a subordinate agent, operating by a communicated energy, and acting like a moving power in a machine; at the same time so contrived, as to continue its agency for an appointed period, without being, as Dr. Price supposed, continually acted upon.

It is objected by Cudworth, still contending for a plastic nature, that the continual superintendence of Deity is not consistent "with the slow and gradual progress in the generation of things," which shews the agent not to be omnipotent. "An omnipotent agent", observes the author, "as it could dispatch its work in a moment, so it would always do it infallibly and irresistibly."* The invalidity of this objection is almost too obvious to require exposure. In order to give this argument any weight, the author would, in the first place, be required to prove, that physical power is not necessarily subject to the government of the intellectual and moral attributes, with which it is associated. To consider, what the former could effect, without the direction of the latter,

* Book I. Chap. III.

is to take an incorrect and imperfect view of the subject. 2dly, It would be incumbent on him to shew, that infinite wisdom and infinite goodness require, that progression be excluded from the works of God, and that every production be instantaneously completed in a perfect state, as if by a single stroke. And 3dly, if it were proved, that infinite wisdom demands this instantaneous perfection, it would be incumbent on the learned author to reconcile with this wisdom the employment of a subordinate agent, by whom that would be completed slowly, which the attribute requires should be perfected at once, and Omnipotence is capable of perfecting instantaneously. If gradual perfection be inconsistent with the attributes of Deity, how will the employment of a subordinate agent reconcile it with these perfections? If, on the contrary, gradual perfection be compatible with these attributes, it matters not, whether it take place by the immediate agency of the Divine Being, or by that of any subordinate or secondary cause. We assume with the author, that the purposes of Deity are wise and good; and if

such, the gradual processes of nature must be agreeable to His will: we may therefore, as well refer them directly to His immediate energy, as to a subordinate agent. If He did not will this gradual progression, why did He employ an instrument with powers so limited, as to be incapable of perfecting its productions at once, or unable to execute the purposes of His will? And if He *did will* this gradual progression, can we err in ascribing it to His immediate operation? Had it been derogatory to His nature, or inconsistent with His perfections, He would have excluded it from His works; and if not incompatible with His counsels, or repugnant to His nature, may it not be referred to His own direct agency? We dishonour the Deity by supposing, that He would employ a subordinate agent to execute any plan, in a manner, which Infinite Wisdom would disapprove, or which it would derogate from His dignity to adopt Himself.

It is farther objected by the same author against the doctrine of immediate agency, "that the errors and accidents in the formation of things shew, that the agent is

not irresistible, and that nature is not such a thing, as is incapable of being frustrated or disappointed. A plant will advance more or less in growth, as the season may happen to favour it: and if heat and air be withdrawn, it will die. Is it credible, that the power of the Deity should be so baffled? The author pronounces the sentiment to be impious.

How prone we are to charge others with impiety, when their apprehensions of the Divine Being do not exactly accord with our own! The advocate for a plastic nature affirms the doctrine of his opponents to be impious; while they, on the other hand, scruple not to assert, that his hypothesis leads to the horrors of Atheism. It were well, if theologians would bear in mind, that no sentiment or expression should be charged with impiety, the intention of which is not to degrade the majesty of the Divine Being. To a Trinitarian the tenets of the Socinian may appear impious, and conversely; he also, who believes in the eternity of hell torments, may seem to others as guilty of impiety, in impeaching the infinite benevolence of his

Maker. But how dishonourable soever to the Divinity may be the tenets of any man, or sect of men, in our apprehension, if those who maintain them, desire to think reverentially of their Maker, no man, we conceive, should presume to charge them with deliberate impiety.

It is doubtless true, that we observe occasional deviations from the ordinary course of nature. We perceive, as the learned author remarks, the processes of generation, and the vegetation of plants, frequently interrupted by some apparently untoward circumstance, and their propagation obstructed, or the vegetative principle sometimes destroyed. In the animal world also, we find some entirely barren, and occasionally others producing monsters. Can we believe, it is asked, that, if the Deity acted immediately, and not by general laws, His designs would be thus frustrated? Is it not more rational to suppose, that He employs secondary causes—a plastic nature, or unintelligent agent,—whose operations may be either thwarted or suspended, by the intervention or opposition of other secondary causes?

This objection rests upon a similar ground with the one preceding, and admits a similar answer. The distinction between a primary and subordinate agent is obvious; and it will be granted that, when the latter is in any degree supposed independent on the former, either by possessing some inherent powers of its own, or the communicated properties not being always under the control of the superior, the merit or demerit, which may belong to the one, may not justly be ascribed to the other. But, where the powers of the subordinate agent are entirely the communications of his superior, and their operations at all times under his inspection and control, we apprehend that the established maxim, *Causa causæ est etiam causa causati*, is here strictly and unquestionably applicable. If then the voluntary author of any cause must be regarded also as the author of its foreseen effects, how can this hypothesis be admitted as a vindication of the omnipotence of Deity? How can it be received as an explanation of these anomalies, or as a disproof of the immediate agency of the Divine Being? Will the

advocates of the hypothesis maintain, that He did not foresee the insufficiency or the obstructions of the plastic nature in certain cases? Is not this to vindicate His omnipotence at the expense of His omniscience? And is this piety? If he foresaw the failures, and could not preclude them, where is His omnipotence, which they offer this hypothesis to defend? If he foresaw them, and could, but would not, prevent them, the conclusion must be, that He willed them to exist. Nothing can be more evident, than that the designs of nature, if an unintelligent agent can be said to have designs, or the designs of nature's laws, and their mode of operation in every instance, must be regarded as the designs of their Omnipotent and Intelligent Author. The plastic nature, be it what it may, derives its existence and its powers from Him. It acts as He wills, and can in no case act otherwise. Its agency therefore is His agency, and its frustrations are His frustrations. The hypothesis therefore leaves the difficulty, whatever it may be, precisely where it was. It should be rejected, therefore, as unsatisfactory and

useless. This is not all. It would absurdly vindicate the omnipotence and omniscience of the Deity, by supposing that, though it would be an impeachment of these attributes to imagine, that they can be directly frustrated, it is yet no imputation against these perfections, that their purposes may be indirectly disappointed. What strange inconsistency is this! What absurdity in the thought, that the counsels of Infinite Wisdom and Power can by any cause be defeated! We reject the hypothesis as thus defended, and pronounce it to be worse than useless.

But this is not the only ground on which we withhold our assent to the doctrine of a plastic nature. We say to its advocates—How do you know, or whence have you learned, that these abortions and defects, these anomalies and failures, as you consider them, are indeed, without your hypothesis, to be regarded as frustrations of Divine power? Are you competent to decide on the counsels of Omniscience, and warranted to deny, that these irregularities are not ordained by Him for useful purposes, some of which are evident,

and constitute necessary parts of His scheme of Providence? You are involved in glaring inconsistency. You presume a plastic nature, to vindicate the omnipotence of Deity, to account for a *lusus naturæ*, or for the premature destruction of a tree, a shrub, or a cabbage; but you have no scruple in referring many of the numerous moral evils, to which human life is subject—its vexations, its disquietudes, its afflictions, its cares, and its sorrows,—to the direct and immediate counsels of the Great Arbiter of our destinies. Refer all to the same Wise and Omnipotent Cause, and you will then be consistent with yourself. And why, let me further ask, is the hypothesis proposed? But because in your apprehension, an immediate superintending agency would render "Divine Providence operose, solicitous, and distractious."* From such a conception of an Almighty and Eternal Being, we shrink with inexpressible repugnance and aversion. Can Omnipotence be fatigued, or Omniscience distracted? When will men cease to think the Deity such an one as themselves?

* Cudworth's Intellectual System, Book I. Chap. III.

We reject, therefore, the hypothesis of a plastic nature, not because we believe that it has, when rightly understood, the slightest tendency to promote Atheism; for to suppose that, because an intelligent agent employs an instrument to produce a certain effect, the instrument could itself produce the same effect, is an inference quite absurd; but we reject it, 1st, Because it proceeds on an assumption degrading to Deity, by assimilating Him to the puny and imbecile, yet proud and arrogant, creature, man; whose notions of labour, fatigue, distraction, and dignity, it would transfer to the Almighty and Omniscient Sovereign of the universe. 2dly, Because it absurdly assumes, that the continual and immediate agency of the Deity would be equivalent to a miraculous administration of our concerns. 3dly, The advocates of the hypothesis not only involve themselves in inconsistency, but set the attributes of the Deity in mutual repugnance, vindicating Omnipotence at the expense of His Omniscience. 4thly, The difficulty, which they themselves create by their erroneous apprehensions of

the Divine dignity, their hypothesis serves not in the least degree to remove.

SECTION IV.

The Providence of Deity is universal, embracing every event.

It would appear, then, that the objections, which have been urged against a particular Providence, and even the constant and immediate agency of Deity, admit a clear and satisfactory answer. If this view of the subject be adopted, what we term the laws of nature, or secondary causes, can be considered only as modes of His constant and superintending Providence. And, if we admit the existence of an intermediate agency, thus much is certain, that the power of all secondary causes being derived from Him, and their operation constantly subject to His control, their effects are wholly to be referred to His will. Nor can we consistently believe, that it would derogate from His Majesty to execute immediately, whatever he ordains a se-

condary cause, or subordinate agent, to accomplish.

Some theologians, rejecting the doctrine of a Providence merely general, as irreconcileable with the perfections of the Supreme Being, and conceiving, at the same time, that the constant superintendence of His works is somewhat incompatible with the dignity of His nature, have adopted the doctrine of a universal Providence, not conducted by His immediate agency, but the result of laws established at the creation. They disclaim, however, the belief, that the Providence of the Deity is confined to the more important interests of the universe, or that the laws, which He has ordained, can by any supposed "crossing or jostling" produce any effect, which He did not design; and they maintain the conviction, that no event, no occurrence, was too minute for His Providence not to comprehend, when he appointed those laws, and gave existence to the system. In these important respects, their doctrine is to be distinguished from that, which affirms only a general Providence, or the hypothesis of a plastic nature, both of which refer the

regularities to one cause, and the anomalies to another.

The doctrine of a Universal Providence thus understood, differs not, either in its essential principle, or practical influence, from that, which maintains the continual and immediate agency of Deity: but we cannot assent to its adoption on the ground, which its advocates assume, that the latter is derogatory to the dignity of the Divine Being. We do not deny the truth of their doctrine; but we express our surprise, that they should question ours. For surely, if all things past, present, and future, are equally open to the Deity, then as *we*, on the one hand, cannot doubt, that the Supreme Being foresaw the operation of the laws, established at the Creation, in every minute particular to the end of time; so, on the other, if *they* admit his Omniscience, they must believe, that not the most minute occurrence can escape His all-seeing eye.

In truth, unless we impugn the perfections of Deity, and entertain the most irrational apprehensions of His nature, there is no one tenet in the whole science of

theology, more clear, or more certain, than the doctrine of a continual and universal Providence. For, if we believe in the Omnipotence and the Omniscience of Deity, we must believe, that every event, how insignificant soever it may appear to us, is known to Him, and that all causes are subject to His continual direction and control. And whether we adopt the opinion, that He originally established laws, which should operate, as long as He designed the system to last, or believe in his continual agency, we must perceive, that the two doctrines are, in spirit and in effect, precisely identical. For in the ordination of primordial laws, we must be persuaded, that He foresaw every effect, which they would produce, even the most minute, and that not even the sparrow, or the worm, was overlooked in their appointment; or we must deny Him the attribute of Omniscience. Between the advocate for primordial ordination, and those for immediate agency, the main point must be mutually conceded. He, who contends for the latter of these doctrines, must admit, that the plan of the Divine government

existed in the Divine mind, when the world was formed; and that the Deity preordained or foresaw every cause, with its effect, from the commencement of the scheme to the consummation of His counsels. He, on the other hand, who maintains the original establishment of universal laws, must acknowledge, that the all-seeing eye of God every moment pervades the immensity of his works, beholding every movement of the vast machine. *He*, who contends for the immediate agency of the Deity, does not dispute His omniscience, or His foreknowledge; nor does *he*, on the other hand, who maintains the establishment of original laws, embracing every event at the creation of the universe, presume to deny the omnipresence of the Divine Being. While the doctrine, then, which would represent the Providence of God as conducted by general laws, whose operation, established at the creation, should provide only for the general safety of the system, to the neglect of all minor or individual concerns, must be rejected, as utterly irreconcileable with the wisdom and goodness of Deity; it must be evident to every reflecting mind,

that the two doctrines, which represent His Providence as extending to the most minute event, whether by primordial laws, or continual superintendence, both in principle and in effect, precisely accord. By each of them we are taught to believe, that the condition of no sentient being, how insignificant soever it may appear to us, is overlooked. We have, in the Prescience and Omniscience of Deity, which in reference to future and present events we naturally consider as different attributes, though in the Divine mind there is no distinction, the one necessarily comprehending the other, a sufficient security, that no event can escape His knowledge, and that without His permission not a hair of our heads can fall to the ground.

If the Supreme Being then either established a system of laws, which should operate by powers derived from Him, as long as He designed the world to exist, and comprehending every, the most minute, occurrence; or if by His Omniscience and continued agency, He still presides over the affairs of the universe, the question naturally presents itself, Why are irregularities

and evils permitted to exist? Why under the government of a Being wise, powerful and benevolent, are they not excluded?

To this important subject our attention was directed, in our inquiry into the nature and attributes of Deity. Why man is placed in this, and no higher, grade of existence, why he and the system around him should be so constituted, that any evil should be necessary for the prevention of a greater evil, or the production of good, are questions, which, ignorant as we are of the counsels of Infinite Wisdom, it is impossible for us to solve. Of this truth, however, we have an absolute certainty, a conviction which nothing can shake, namely, that the perfections of an Eternal Being must be infinite. To deny this truth is to affirm a contradiction. We know also, that there must be gradations of existence, and that to inquire, why an infinite Being does not produce the highest possible happiness in all cases, is a question, which involves an egregious absurdity. For this is to limit the degree of happiness, and thus to set bounds to that power, which the inquiry presumes to be infinite. Here is a manifest contradiction.

We should do well also to bear in mind, that, constituted as our understandings are, all anomalies in the vegetable and animal creation, on which so much stress is laid, as an argument against a continual superintending providence, serve to teach us one important lesson. They clearly show, by what a slight change in the operating causes, the whole economy of the vegetable, of the animal, and even of the intellectual world, might be deranged; and with what astonishing wisdom, and nicety of adjustment every plant and every sentient being is organised, so as to produce a happy result. One single unnatural or monstrous production, the causes of which elude our research, irresistibly suggests the question, which we have previously asked, why is not every man from his birth, blind or deaf; an idiot, or a madman? To this question no other answer can be given, than that the animal and vegetable creations are formed in wisdom. It is thus we are led to acknowledge the hand of a wise and benevolent Creator.

The same observation is applicable to the existence of evil generally. If all had been good, we should have had no conception of

evil, nor the least idea, that any other state was possible. All would have been ascribed to fate or necessity. Of wisdom, as selecting or ordaining means to ends, or of benevolence, as *willing* order and happiness, we could have had no conception. Man indeed, we do not mean to deny, might have been constituted with different intellectual faculties, capable of arriving at the knowledge of a Supreme cause, without the medium of evil. But man then would not have been man, but a being of a different order; and to inquire, why is he of this and not that order, is to inquire, why there are grades of existence, why there is a sentient being below us, and beings, as we justly presume there are, of a higher order than ourselves. The farther we carry our researches into nature, the stronger is our conviction, that no evil exists for its own sake, and that the Deity is purely benevolent, the livelier also our hope, that He has ulterior purposes to answer by these evils, and that all will ultimately terminate in good.

The humble enquirer into the works and ways of God, conscious of his own

littleness, and feeling himself as incapable of comprehending the counsels of Omniscience, as of grasping the planetary system in his hand, will rest satisfied with the conviction, that he is at all times under the protection of power, of wisdom, and of goodness, far more than adequate to his security and happiness. Infinity of perfection exceeds his comprehension. It is enough for him to know, that the attributes of Deity far transcend his conception, and are all interested in his protection. It is sufficient for him to be assured, that he has not been thrown into a world, where he is neglected or forgotten; but that he is at all times under the charge of sovereign power, unerring wisdom, and unchangeable goodness. Reposing unlimited confidence in the Almighty Ruler of the Universe, he regards every evil, that befals him, as benevolently ordained for his ultimate happiness. He feels little or no interest in the solution of the question, whether the world be governed by laws established by Deity at its creation, and embracing every event; or whether the Universe be continually under His superintendence, and every

event the immediate ordination of His will. It is enough for him to be persuaded, that the knowledge of the Deity extends to the most minute occurrence; that he is himself constantly under the eye of his Maker* and Preserver; that he is every moment under His protection; and that no event can take place in the Universe of God, without the permission of Him, who called it into being. The Omniscience of the Deity he feels to be the exercise of a universal Providence. "Wherever I am" he says, "whithersoever I go, the eye of the great Ruler of Nature is with me. I

* How sublime is the Psalmist David's description of the Omnipresence and Omniscience of Deity. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." Psalms 139.—In sublimity, and simplicity, Pagan antiquity has produced nothing, which will bear comparison with this admirable and affecting description of the Divine ubiquity.

behold evils around me; some I myself am doomed to bear. Why these evils should exist under the government of a good, wise, and Omnipotent Being, I see in part; but do not fully comprehend. But unless I shut my eyes to the phenomena around me, I must believe in the wisdom, the power, and the benevolence of Deity. To dogmatise on subjects beyond my reach, as if I could scan the counsels of Eternal Wisdom, is arrogance and presumption, ill becoming a creature, 'who sees darkly as through a glass.' The terrestrial ball, on which I live, is physically connected with other spheres; may it not have also a moral connection? Until I know more of the whole system, than I yet know, I must learn to speculate on the ways of God, with humility and reverence. I cannot assent to contradictions; but when I see wisdom displayed far surpassing my comprehension, I must not dare to pronounce that wrong, which does not accord with my weak and narrow apprehensions. I comprehend not my own nature; it presents insuperable difficulties; how can I fathom the counsels of my Creator? Were the Deity a being com-

prehensible to my understanding, could I perceive Him by sense, or even conceive the mode of His existence, it would be an evidence of His finitude, and he would be no Deity in my estimation. To require this evidence is to demand a contradiction. I see enough, and know enough to be assured, that an Almighty, Wise, and Good Being presides over the system, to which I belong; and in His Universal Providence I humbly and gratefully rejoice; satisfied, that, wherever I am, there He is also, and that without Him not even a hair of my head shall perish."

ESSAY III.

ON

THE IMMATERIALITY

OF

THE SOUL.

CHAPTER I.

SECTION I.

"In animi autem cognitione dubitare non possumus, nisi plane in physicis plumbei sumus, quin nihil sit animis admixtum, nihil concretum, nihil copulatum, nihil coagmentatum, nihil duplex; quod, cum ita sit, certe nec secerni, nec dividi, nec discerpi, nec distrahi potest: nec interire igitur."—CIC. TUSC. QUÆST. lib. i.

Is man one uniform substance entirely material, deriving his powers of thought from organization; or does he consist of two distinct and dissimilar substances, matter, and what has been termed spirit, or something, which is not material? Though the imperfection of our faculties may preclude the possibility of ever arriving at such a clear

and satisfactory solution of this question, as to command the doubtless assent of every candid and intelligent psychologist; and, though the doctrine of a Futurity is to be established on other ground, than the immateriality of the soul, yet, on whichever side of the question the arguments on this subject shall be conceived to preponderate, the conclusion will necessarily, in some degree, affect the evidence of that important truth, which is to be the matter of our next inquiry, reasoning only from the light of nature.

It might seem, therefore, an omission scarcely pardonable, if we entirely excluded the question from consideration. If it can be proved, or shewn to be highly probable, that there is in man a principle, or substance, not material, and not dependent on the body for its existence, then it will follow, that, after the dissolution of the latter, the former may still continue to exist*. Though the one

* The deist cannot but feel a deep interest in the doctrine of the soul's immateriality; but the Christian, we conceive, offers an indignity to the Author of his faith, when he believes, or argues, as if he believed, that the materiality of the human soul would render a future state in any degree less probable. This, says Locke justly and pertinently, is

perish, the other may survive. Nay, if not a single particle of the corporeal frame be annihilated, the presumption would be strong, that the immaterial substance will not be destroyed, when the body is dissolved. If, on the other hand, the evidence shall preponderate in favour of that hypothesis, which maintains, that man is purely a material being, and that his mental powers are the result of organization, then it will follow, that the destruction of these powers is necessarily involved in that of his corporeal frame. The hope of the Theist however, will still rest on other strong, and less contestable, grounds.

In discussing this very important question, I shall begin with the arguments in favour of

to maintain, that, what God reveals, is to be believed, if reason demonstrate it to be true; but that "He is not to be believed on His own word, unless what He reveals be in itself credible, and might be believed without Him." If God declares an immaterial substance to be immortal, we are to believe it; but, if He declares a material substance to be immortal, we are not to assent to His declaration with the same degree of confidence! Can a more unpardonable insult be offered to the veracity of the Divine Being?—Is not the Christian aware, what a wound he thus inflicts on the faith, which he professes?

the latter hypothesis, after offering one preliminary observation.

Some philosophers and theologists, in order to clear the doctrine of immaterialism from some difficulties, with which it is embarrassed, have adopted an opinion, that the human soul is an extended substance, having local existence, but indiscerptible; while others have denied to it extension, but have attributed to it locality. Watts and Doddridge, to whom I may add the celebrated Des Cartes and his disciples, maintained, that the soul is purely immaterial, having no relation to space. Locke seems to have formed no very consistent opinion on the subject. In his letter to the Bishop of Worcester, he observes, that his proof of the immateriality of the Divine Being might have rendered it probable, that the thinking substance in us is also immaterial, and that such was his belief; but it would be easy to shew that the arguments, by which the former doctrine may be demonstrated, are entirely inapplicable to the proof of the latter. He admits the possibility, that the soul may be a subtle attenuated matter, which he terms spirit. Matter he considers to be "that which is solid, whether

it thinks or not; spirit, that which thinks, whether solid or not." "It is worth our consideration," he says, "whether active power be not the proper attribute of spirits, and passive power *, of matter. Hence it may be conjectured, that created spirits are not totally separate from matter, because they are both active and passive. Pure spirit, namely, God, is only active; pure matter is only passive. Those beings, that are active and passive, we may judge to partake of both." †

It is difficult to reconcile this passage, in which he affirms the existence of only one immaterial Being, with a subsequent assertion, "that we have no more reason to doubt, or deny the existence of such [immaterial] spirits, than we have to deny or doubt the existence of body." ‡ But, whatever inconsistencies may be detected in the opinions, which this able philosopher has delivered on the subject, it would seem that he was desirous, that he should be considered to be an

* The notion of passive power, which is here asserted by this distinguished metaphysician, has been justly censured as incorrect.

† Locke's Essay, 9th Ed. p. 30.

‡ Ib. chap. 2, p. 23.

Immaterialist. His admission, however, that spirit may possibly be a subtle attenuated matter, and that, for aught we know, Omnipotence might invest material substance with the power of thinking, has subjected him to the suspicion of favouring the doctrine of Immaterialism. Spirit, it is true, however attenuated, is still matter; and any intermediate hypothesis between Materialism and Immaterialism is untenable. Every attempt to reconcile the two doctrines, must inevitably involve its author in the difficulties of both. The hypothesis, which we are disposed to advocate is, that the human mind is a pure, simple, indivisible being, invested with properties and powers, to which those of matter bear no real resemblance, having neither extension nor locality. And, if the doctrine of its existence be established, our incapacity to conceive the manner, in which it does exist, can furnish no rational objection against the fact. We may have ample evidence, that a substance exists, and may be acquainted with its essential powers and its effects, and yet be wholly incapable of comprehending the mode of its existence. We proceed now to state the arguments, which have been urged in favour of Materialism.

SECTION II.

Objections against Immaterialism, and arguments in favour of Materialism, stated and examined.

1st, It is argued against the hypothesis of Immaterialism, that we have not only all the proof, which complete inductive evidence can furnish, that no substance can act on another, unless by means of some common property, but also "the additional proof, which arises from the impossibility of conceiving, how the opposite proposition can be true."*

We answer, first, that if this argument had any validity, it would lead to a conclusion, which every rational Theist must deny. It can have no weight, but as proceeding from an Atheist, or from one of the disciples of Epicurus, or Spinoza. For, if it be impossible for one substance to act on another, unless they have some common property, then either the Deity must be a Material Being, or He cannot act on matter. Which of these alternatives will the Theist adopt?

* Cooper's Tracts, p. 191.

Can he rationally admit either? The former has been proved to be an absurdity; and the phenomena of nature amply disprove the latter *.

2dly, We would ask Mr. Cooper, and not him only, but all those, who indulge in a similar assumption, on what rational authority he presumes, that his conceptions are to be constituted the standards of physical possibility. Is he, whose field of experience is, in the immensity of creation, but the insect's leaf, acquainted with all the possible or existing modes of being, and of agency? Will he

* Dr. Priestley felt the force of this objection, and attempted to remove it; but, in our apprehension, very unsuccessfully. He denied that "a substance, which has no property whatever in common with matter, and that bears no relation to space, exists." What reason did this distinguished philosopher assign for this negation?—"Because," says he "according to this definition, (of an Immaterial principle,) the Divine Being is necessarily cut off from all communication with, and all action or influence upon, His own creation." † Did the learned author justly reprehend the audacity of one philosopher, who consented to renounce the *Omniscience* of Deity, rather than relinquish a favourite hypothesis? And is *he* much less pardonable, who asserts a position, which, notwithstanding the author's qualification, would exclude the Divine Being, if not material, from his own creation, rather than he should relinquish the doctrine of Materialism?

† Priestley's Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit, p. 108.

venture to affirm, that no substance can exist, which is not discoverable by his five senses, not visible or tangible? If not, with what consistency does he, who knows and acknowledges only material substance, presume to know the laws, by which other substances may be governed? Let him prove, that the hypothesis, which he controverts, involves a contradiction, and his argument will then be admitted to be conclusive; but there is something superlatively arrogant and ridiculous in the notion, that the conceptions of the creature man are to be assumed as the measures of possible agency. The Materialist tells us, that he cannot conceive how a material and an immaterial substance can act and react on each other; can he conceive the means, however well he may be acquainted with the facts, by which matter acts on matter? If the latter agency take place without contact, as we have reason to believe, we perceive nothing irreconcileable with reason in believing also, that an immaterial being may act on a material substance, without impulse, or mutual contact.

3dly, His argument amounts to nothing but a gratuitous assertion, and begs the

question. The Immaterialist maintains, that the constitution of man furnishes an example of the fact, that an immaterial can act on a material substance. How does the Materialist attempt to disprove the alleged fact? He assumes, that it is not true. But does he not, it may be urged, appeal to the evidence of Induction, in support of his assumption? Let us enquire a little into the validity of this appeal.

It is said, that we have complete inductive evidence, that no substance can act on another, without some common property; and therefore, that there can be no mutual action and reaction between a material, and an immaterial, substance. A question here naturally presents itself, namely, how can the Materialist have any evidence whatever, either complete or incomplete, of the fact, which he asserts, since he denies the existence of an immaterial substance? When a chemist affirms, that he has ample inductive evidence, that the sulphuric acid cannot, as a solvent, act on glass, he appeals to repeated experiments. He immerses the solid in the fluid substance, and he finds, that in every trial it retains its solid form. Now, let the Materialist produce an example, wherein

a material and an immaterial substance are mutually exposed to action and reaction with no result, and we will consent to receive even one single instance, as complete inductive evidence. If he reply, that such an experiment is impossible, for that nothing but matter exists, we object, 1st, That to assert this, is to beg the question; and 2dly, We ask, where is his inductive evidence of the mutual agency, or non-agency, of two substances, when, by his own acknowledgement, only one of them exists. This is truly a singular specimen of logical argumentation, a curious sample of inductive proof. 4thly, We have still another question, suggested by the preceding observations, to put to the Materialist. Admitting the evidence of induction to be possible, though his own hypothesis necessarily excludes it, we ask, what is the nature of the evidence, to which he appeals? It must ultimately resolve itself either into that of sense, or that of consciousness. The latter alternative, we presume, will not be asserted. Consciousness, or reflection, if it does not clearly conduct to a contrary conclusion, must be allowed by the Materialist himself to furnish no decisive information on the subject.

Priestley has contended, that consciousness cannot inform us what we are, but merely what we do, or what we suffer. It must then be the evidence of sense, to which the Materialist appeals. Here then, we apprehend, the argument of the Materialist betrays not merely error, but inconsistency and absurdity. The testimony of sense may convince us, that a certain given phenomenon does not exist; but can sense prove, that it cannot exist? Is the absence of a fact an infallible evidence of its impossibility? Or is it one and the same thing to say, that a fact is not proved by experience, as to say, that it is disproved by experience? Before the known powers of the electric fluid were ascertained, it was not proved by experience, that it is capable of igniting certain inflammable substances. But was its incapacity *disproved?* This cannot be maintained, unless it be asserted also, in contradiction to fact, that the laws, by which the agency of the fluid is now governed, have undergone an alteration, and that experience now proves, what experience formerly disproved. The distinction, therefore, for which we contend, and which evinces the utter fallacy of the author's argument, is obvious.

To appeal to sense in order to prove the non-agency, and therefore the non-existence, of an object, not perceptible by sense, is, of all extravagancies in argument, surely the most enormous. It is absurd. We reject the argument, therefore, as inconsistent with an established truth, namely, the immateriality of the Divine nature,—as erecting human conception into a standard of possible agency,—as offering a mere assumption for the refutation of a hypothesis,—confounding the absence of evidence with repugnant evidence, in other words, what is *not proved* by experience with what is *disproved* by experience; and appealing to induction, where, by his own hypothesis, induction is impossible.

2dly, The Materialist contends, that an immaterial substance, having no extension, has no local existence. If the soul exists nowhere, he asks, what is it, or how can it exist at all?

Some Immaterialists, acknowledging more force in this objection than we are inclined to admit, have renounced the doctrine of a pure immaterial being, and have supposed the soul to have extension, and to occupy place. They adopt, it would seem, this hypothesis, because they cannot understand how a substance can exist, unless in their

own mode of existence; they accordingly accommodate the nature of the soul to their conceptions of possibility. The very principle, on which this accommodation is offered, we reject, as having no better foundation than ignorance and conceit. It betrays, in our apprehension, narrow views, irreconcileable with the principles of an enlarged mind, and the spirit of an enlightened philosophy. But let us proceed to examine the argument.

It will not be maintained, that *space* is either a substance, or a quality. It is not a substance; for then it must be either body, or it must be mind, as something contra-distinguished to any material substance. It is not body, for it is not an object of sense, and the Materialist himself will not allow it to be mind, or something not material. *Space* is therefore mere inanity; and *place* is that portion of the vacuity which a body does, or may, occupy. The latter term is relative, having a reference to other bodies; or, as Locke observes, to two or more fixed points. As an object of conception, it is necessarily associated with material substance, to which alone, as possessing extension, it seems to have any conceivable relation. An immaterial being, if it can have any re-

lation to space, which it is impossible for us to learn, cannot have the same relation to it, as its contrary, or a material substance. If matter were annihilated, space would have no existence. We acquire our notion of distance by the sense of touch, and then we gain a notion of extension generally; and as we form an idea of infinite number, by conceiving number added to number without limit, we acquire our notion of infinite space, by conceiving distance added to distance without termination. Space then, regarded as a conception of the mind, may be considered to be the idea of distance extended at pleasure. When we assign dimensions to space, as something external, they are the dimensions of a void, proceeding from, and ending with, imaginary points.

All language is chiefly the enunciation of sensible impressions, and confined almost entirely to body, and its qualities. And so powerfully does it influence our judgments, that, unless constantly on our guard, we are seduced into the persuasion, that, whatever has a name, has a real existence; and that what is neither visible, nor tangible, is a nonentity. When we say, then, that whatever exists must exist in space, we employ a phraseology adapted to the perceptions of

sight and touch, and mean nothing more, than a predication of its being. But when we say, that every substance occupies place, and must exist somewhere, or in some place, we affirm, what we are not justified in asserting, I mean, universal materiality. Our senses also are continually and necessarily referring us to visible and tangible objects occupying place, and from this cause likewise we are prone to conclude, that what has no extension, or no locality, can have no existence. This we consider to be a hasty and unphilosophical conclusion. But it is asked, is it not a contradiction to affirm, that a thing exists, and yet exists nowhere? This question, urged, as an objection to the hypothesis of immaterialism, implies, that what occupies no place, can have no being. This dogma we reject for these reasons:

1st, It necessarily leads, like the preceding objection, to a conclusion demonstrably absurd, that the Deity is not an immaterial Being; the absurdity, therefore, of the consequence proves the falsity of the dogma.

2dly, It begs the question; it assumes a fact, which it is impossible either for reason, or experience to prove. It concludes, that there is no immaterial principle in man, because an immaterial soul is not material,

possessing extension, and occupying place. It would preposterously constitute our senses as the criterions of possible existence, implying the dogma of some ancient Atheists, that man is the measure of all things *. It would establish a negative evidence, as an argument for a positive fact. We can pardon the untutored rustic, who has never looked into the universe, and who has no notion of any other habitation, than the earth on which he lives, and where he holds a preeminence, for entertaining the belief that he is the highest of God's works; but in the philosopher, capable of raising his contemplation to other worlds, thousands of which are superior to ours in magnitude, such a narrow and unphilosophical opinion appears to us to be as inexcusable, as it is irrational. There is no truth, which an enlightened mind more firmly believes, than that man is not at the head of the intellectual creation, and that therefore there may be, and most probably are, beings, and modes of existence, of which our senses can give us no information. On this ground, then, we come to this conclusion, that, though in popular language it may seem a contradiction to say,

* This was the doctrine of Protagoras, and others of the same school.—See Plato's *Theætetus.*

that a substance exists, yet exists nowhere or in no place; and though to suppose such a substance may be a contradiction in sense, inasmuch as its existence is not attested by sense, or pictured in imagination; there is so far from being a contradiction to reason in such a supposition, that, unless we adopt the narrow and absurd dogma, to which I have alluded, we cannot but believe, that beings exist, whose modes of existence and agency we are as incapable of comprehending, as a man born blind of conceiving the agency and effects of light.

Mr. Cooper seems to think it perfectly clear, that extension is inseparable from our notion of existence. It is equally clear to us, that in this opinion he errs. He will not deny, that it is, by the senses of sight and touch, and of these only, that we are able to form any conception of extension; and yet there can be no doubt, that a person, not possessed of these two senses, might have a notion of existence *.

We now proceed to examine the argument, as urged in a somewhat different form.

3dly, It is asked, if the soul be purely immaterial, how can it accompany the body, having no local existence?

* Encyc. Brit., Art. Metaphysics.

"That the mind", says Priestley, "may move the body, and move itself along with the body, we may think a tolerably easy supposition; but what shall we say of the case of a body being moved during sleep or a swoon, to which removal the mind does not at all contribute? It will hardly be said, that the soul is, first of all, left behind in the place, whence the body was taken, and afterwards voluntarily joins its companion." *

This objection to immaterialism, like the one preceding, has been urged by the Materialist, as insuperable and conclusive. We are not aware that it has ever been viewed in the light, in which we are inclined to consider it; but to us it appears to be wholly fallacious, being not only founded in a groundless, though specious, analogy, but involving also the absurd presumption, that a substance is, what it is not, and yet is, what it is, at one and the same time. It would subvert the hypothesis of the Immaterialist, by an objection assuming, that an immaterial being, having no material properties, must, at the same time, possess material properties, and be subject to the laws, by which matter is governed. When the Materialist talks of the soul, as being at rest, as being

* Correspondence with Price, p. 274.

moved, as accompanying the body, and as being left behind, does he not assume that to be material, having extension, mobility, and *inertia*, which is at the same time represented as purely immaterial? Is not this an egregious inconsistency? We believe, that the thinking substance has no quality common to it with matter, neither length, nor breadth, nor thickness, nor gravity, nor mobility*, nor is it liable to any of the accidents of matter. How does the Materialist attempt to disprove this hypothesis? By proposing a question, which presumes that an immaterial substance must have all these

* Some Immaterialists admit mobility to be a property of an immaterial being. This was the opinion of Mr. Locke.—"Mere mobility", says an eminent philosopher, "is not peculiar to matter; for the mind accompanies the body in all its changes of situation."† We have expressed a different opinion; but ignorant as we must be of the mode, in which an immaterial being exists, acts, and suffers, dogmatically to maintain any hypothesis on the question of locomotion, would argue a degree of presumption and pertinacity, which reason cannot approve, and the spirit of sound philosophy must condemn. Motivity we consider to be an attribute of mind, which we believe to be the spring of all motion and action. Mobility, a passive quality, we consider to belong to body only. Of the correctness of our opinion the metaphysical reader will form his own judgment.

† Robison's Elements of Mechanical Philosophy, p. 84.

qualities; and that, if an immaterial substance be not material, it can have no existence. This is surely a manifest absurdity. Let him prove, that, if a substance be immaterial, it must possess all the properties of matter, and he may then pertinently enquire, whether in a swoon the soul is moved, when the body is moved; or whether it is left behind. But is it not a monstrous error to suppose a thing to be what it is, and then to affirm, that it cannot be such, because it is not its contrary?

It has been already remarked, that in our earliest state of existence, whether as a species or as individuals, our attention is necessarily devoted solely to sensible objects; hence, our language is accommodated to matter, and its modes. When we advance in knowledge, and have leisure to turn our thoughts to what passes within ourselves, we find names wanting, to express the faculties and operations of the unseen mind; and influenced by a fancied analogy, we transfer the names of things sensible to the expression of things intellectual. Thus we have the terms *apprehension*, *conception*, *abstraction*, *emotion*, and various others, strictly applicable to physical objects, employed by metaphor to denote certain mental powers and

affections. We should err, however, egregiously, if from these expressions we should infer, that the mental affections and operations bear the least resemblance to any of the qualities and properties of matter. It seems as absurd to suppose that mind is moved with the body, in any sense analogous to that, in which two connected bodies move together, as to believe, that an understanding is literally solid, a judgment sharp, a fancy brilliant, or a memory capacious and retentive. The mode, in which an immaterial substance exists, and how it acts and suffers, our senses are manifestly incapable of informing us. Sensible qualities only being objects of perception, an immaterial substance, though its qualities and properties are equally known with those of matter, cannot be pictured in the mind, and language recognizing, in its composition, only physical objects, we are incautiously led to believe, that what is not visible and tangible, or what does not act and suffer like matter, cannot exist.

The Materialist urges, Is not the power of moving, or impelling, a property of body? and does not the Immaterialist admit, that mind can move, or stop the body? Is not this a common property? We certainly do believe, that mind can move matter, but not by any

quality common to it with matter. If it is asked, how can this be, if they have no common quality? we answer, by enquiring of the Materialist, whence he has learned, or by what evidence he can prove, that a common quality is necessary. We cannot permit him to appeal from the laws, which regulate the agency of matter, to those, by which an immaterial substance is governed, or the properties essential to its energies. Believing the soul to be a substance entirely dissimilar to matter, we conclude, that so far from common properties with those of matter being necessary to its action on matter, its energies depend on qualities, to which those of matter bear no resemblance. And we may confidently require the Materialist to adduce a single argument in proof of his assumption, which does not proceed on a *petitio principii;* or a single fact to shew, that a being not material cannot act on one, which is material.

An opponent, we are aware, may call upon us to produce a single instance, in which we perceive an immaterial, acting on a material, substance. It is replied, that a negative experience cannot prove a positive impossibility; and that to require the immaterialist to specify an evidence from sense, of the ex-

istence of a substance, which he affirms, is not an object of sense, is to maintain by implication, that, if a substance is not its contrary, it can have no existence. A blind man might, with equal propriety, call upon us to let him touch light; for that otherwise he should deny its existence. All appeals to sense, in this question, the Immaterialist rejects; and contends, that its decision must rest on other grounds. The Materialist will not be allowed to build an argument on the assumption, that nothing exists, but what is an object of sense; nor will the Immaterialist be permitted to assume without evidence, what we do not perceive; namely, the existence of an immaterial substance.

SECTION III.

Arguments for Materialism continued.

4THLY, It is argued, that, "whenever the existence of each of two things depends mutually on the existence of the other, the non-existence of the one implies the non-existence of the other."* This proposition, under the semblance of logical precision, seems to us to amount to little else than a

mere truism, which no one will dispute. If A could not exist, unless B existed, and if B could not exist, unless A existed, we learn nothing by being told, that they are dependent on each other for their existence.

Wherever, it is argued, we find thought, we find likewise brain; and, wherever there is the latter, there we discover the former also. It was by some such reasoning, that the Epicureans persuaded themselves, that intellect could have no existence, unless clothed in the human shape, and that the Gods in form resembled the human species. It is moreover urged by the Materialist, as an established fact, that the capacity of thought is in all instances greater or less, as the organic structure of the brain is more or less perfect; that, when the brain is in a sound and healthy state, our mental faculties display their energies in perfection; and, on the contrary, when this organ is either injured, or diseased, or weakened by age, the effect is manifested in the mental functions, as either impaired, or suspended, or wholly deranged. It is contended therefore, that we have the same evidence, that the brain thinks, as that the liver secretes, that the

muscles move, or that the alimentary canal digests *.

When we find a certain substance uniformly accompanied with a certain phenomenon, we have good reason generally to conclude, that they have the relation, one to the other, of cause and effect. We infer, that the antecedent possesses some property or power, by which the consequent is produced. Before, however, we assent to the Materialist's deduction, it will be in the first place required of him to shew, that, whatever is necessary to the production of an effect is the cause of that effect, and that the instrument indispensable to an operation is the efficient and ultimate agent. Destroy the fly of a smoke-jack, and the desired effect will cease; but is the fly the real or primary cause of the motion? Destroy the brain, and thought ceases; but this merely proves the necessity of the organ, and nothing more. The destruction of the eye is the deprivation of the visual faculty; but the eye is only the instrument, and not the percipient being. What may be necessary

* Lawrence on Physiology, p. 104.

to an effect is not necessarily its primary cause.

2ndly, The inference of the Materialist cannot be legitimately adopted, if it can be shewn, that the power, or property, of the substance, which is concluded to be the cause of the effect, is incompatible with other known properties of the same substance. The limitation here stated is indispensable, and is admitted by Priestley himself*. Let it be granted, then, that the brain and the power of thinking are as uniformly conjoined, as the liver and the power of secretion; the question is, whether the faculty of thought can be philosophically considered to be an inherent power of the brain as the thinking being, consistently with the other known properties and qualities of matter? Here the contending parties are at issue, the Materialist affirming, and the Immaterialist denying, that reflection, and the consciousness of personal identity and of personal unity, can consist with the divisibility and mutability of the organic substance. On

* The learned and ingenious author, convinced of the necessity of this limitation, and aware of its repugnancy to his hypothesis, represents matter to be nothing, but indivisible points.

the decision of this question, agreeably to the limitation conceded by the Materialist himself, the validity of the argument must rest.

But 3dly, is it true, that we have the same evidence, that the brain thinks, as that the liver secretes? It is confidently asserted, but we hesitate not as confidently to contradict the assertion, expressing at the same time our astonishment, that a proposition, which appears so unfounded, should ever have been so boldly advanced. That the muscles move, and that the liver secretes, are facts attested by the evidence of sense. The immediate causes, with their effects, are visible. The secreting organ, and the matter secreted, we can see and touch. Has the physiologist the testimony of sense for asserting, that the brain thinks? Were it so, we could no more dispute the fact, and the Materialist's hypothesis, than we could deny, that we see, or feel.

That the brain is necessary to thinking, is a truth not to be controverted. To maintain the independence of mind on matter for its perceptions and operations, or to affirm, that we can think without brain, is as absurd as to maintain, that we can see without eyes, hear without ears, or move our limbs with-

out tendons and muscles. But we trust, it must be evident, from the preceding observations, that this admission does not justify the conclusion, that the brain is the thinking being. The physiologist may prove the mutual dependence of mind and body, the connection of intellect with the organization of the *cerebrum*, their concurrent progress, as they are gradually developed, and their simultaneous sympathy, as accident may injure, or age may weaken, the organ of thought; but all this goes merely to prove, that the faculty of thinking depends on the brain; but not that the brain is the thinking substance. It shows, that we think by the brain, as we see by the eye; but the question recurs, who thinks? Does the eye see?* Does the brain think? Or do we see by the one, and think by the other?† The muscles are the

* Priestley has affirmed, "that it is the eye only that sees, the ear that hears, and the nose that smells." An opinion, so unphilosophical, proceeding from Dr. Priestley, we should not expect. Among various other facts, the phenomena of Somnambulism prove it to be false. The eye is the organ, but not the sentient being.

† Mr. Lawrence, we conceive, errs egregiously, if he imagines, that this is a question, which it belongs exclusively to the physiologist to decide. He is conversant in the structure of animal organisms, and investigates the phy-

instruments, by which I move a leg, or an arm; but they are not the source of motion, they are not myself, or the moving being; the brain is the organ of thinking, but it is not the thinking being. The instrument and the agent cannot be one and the same thing. When I speak of myself, I do not mean the brain, or organ of thinking. The subjects are distinct. A paralytic man wills to move a palsied limb; but the nerves and muscles do not obey his volition; the limb does not perform its function. The difference between the person willing, and the instrument which he would employ, is evident. In like manner, I will, but am unable, to recollect a fact, a name, an argument. The brain is the instrument, whose agency is necessary. It does not obey my will; it is incapable of executing my purpose. The brain seems to be as different from the person willing, as the muscles the tendons, or the appropriate nerves.

sical relations, dependencies, and functions of the parts. He can know no more, than he learns by sense. He may ascertain as facts, because they are objects of sense, that the muscles are necessary to motion, the eye to seeing, and the brain to thinking; but beyond these and such other facts, physiology will not conduct him one single step. The question, who sees, thinks, and wills, is not a question for the mere anatomist to solve.

I am conscious, also, that I can exert a direct influence over the agency of the brain. I can affect it with images or impressions, painful or pleasing; I can continue its action to a certain extent of time, or to a certain degree of exertion; or I can interrupt its energies by lulling it into a state of inaction. Can an organ, thus subject to my volitions, be identical with myself? The notion seems to be absurd.

The Materialist disclaims the hypothesis, that the brain is merely an organ, this necessarily implying an agent; and contends, that the brain is itself the thinking substance. Then I, as a conscious, intelligent, willing being, and the brain, are one and the same thing. If so, would it not be an absurdity for a person to speak of his brain, as he would of his leg or his arm? The Materialist, I am aware, replies, that these expressions, as some others, such as "my soul, my mind," though sanctioned by common usage, are founded in vulgar apprehensions*. He contends, that the brain is not the man, any more than an arm, or a leg, or a head is a human being; but that it is a part of a

* Priestley's Disquisitions, p. 94.

man, "by and in which the process of thinking is carried on."* He affirms man to be a system of parts, each performing a certain function, of which parts the brain is one, whose office it is to perceive and to think, or which, rather, is itself the percipient and intelligent substance. But, if we are conscious that we exercise a certain control over the thinking substance, directing its powers to this or that object, suspending its operations, or calling forth its energies, with greater or less activity, the Immaterialist will ask, whether this fact does not shew, that there is something within us, indicating, that this thinking substance is subject, like the other voluntary organs, to the government of an agent of a higher order.

The Materialist appears to feel the force of this argument, and attempts to obviate it by offering the hypothesis of a central point, or "a common centre—a power somewhere, which perceives and controls the other organs:" but it is said, that no proof can be adduced, that this is not material†. The author might have spared himself the remark, that, if such a common

* Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit, p. 94.

† Somatopsychonoologia, p. 55.

central organ exist, it cannot be proved to be immaterial; for an immaterial organ we neither apprehend, nor mean to assert. It is a manifest absurdity. But we contend, that this central organ, whether large or small, is merely hypothetical. We contend, also, that it must have figure and magnitude if it does exist; and that the properties of body, of whatever dimensions, are so dissimilar to the powers of reason and volition, that they cannot be rationally referred to one and the same subject. The Immaterialist also will not fail to remark, that the hypothesis of a central percipient and controlling organ, clearly shews, that the Materialist, in order to account for certain intellectual phenomena, finds it necessary to suppose a substance, endowed with a superior power, which perceives and governs all the other percipient and voluntary organs, though he will not acknowledge it to be immaterial.

This percipient and directing organ is represented by the author, as viewing with astonishment, while we dream, the images created by the other organs; and he infers from the novel combinations occasionally produced, and which could not be created, if one individual independent soul produced

them, that the images are perceived in material organs. The doctrine of images we shall have occasion to examine. The hypothesis of an organ, a piece of soft medullary matter, contemplating with astonishment the operations of other organs, were it not gravely offered to our consideration and assent, we should be tempted to suppose, as intended to ridicule the doctrine of Materialism. The conception is too absurd for either argument or belief. The image or representation of a visible object we can conceive as existing in matter, and occupying space; an image of a smell, a sound, or a taste, we can neither understand, nor conceive. Having no evidence, then, of any central controlling point, and being as incapable of conceiving how this central point, if it did exist, could control or affect the operations of the mind, or the emotions of the soul, as we are of understanding, how an immaterial could act on a material substance, we reject the hypothesis as at once gratuitous and useless; and we contend, that what possesses a voluntary influence over the brain, irritating or composing it, rousing its energies, or lulling them into inaction, must be different from the brain itself.

It seems an extreme misrepresentation in Mr. Lawrence to object, that, if the brain does not think, it performs no function, and holds, as he expresses it, a mere sinecure office. Does the eye, or the ear, perform no function? Do they hold sinecures? But does the eye see, or the ear hear? Mr. Lawrence affirms, and we deny, the position. We contend, that they are merely the organs of the two senses; and express our surprise, that he should have advanced an opinion so unphilosophical and untenable. The Immaterialist will not object to acknowledge, that the brain thinks, in the same sense, in which the eye sees, each being considered as the organ of one simple cogitative being, under whose volition these organs operate; but he repudiates the hypothesis, that man is purely a material substance.

5thly, The soul is indiscerptible and indivisible, according to the opinion of all Immaterialists. Ideas are divisible, having parts; but, if ideas are divisible, they must exist in what has parts, and is divisible; therefore the soul is divisible and material*.

If the medium of proof here assumed were

* Cooper's Tracts, p. 208.

true, the conclusion would be incontrovertible; but it is false, and the conclusion is false.

In the first place, the Materialist here takes it for granted, that ideas are divisible. The intelligible species, and substantial forms, of ancient philosophy are now justly consigned to oblivion. They have given rise, however, to an error, which still generally obtains. To the propagation of this error, the metaphorical language of Locke has not a little contributed; and he has himself been charged, though we are inclined to think unjustly, with maintaining the existence of ideas or images as distinct from the mind, which it contemplates in a manner similar to that, in which the eye surveys the form of a material object in a glass.

Modes of expression, sanctioned by long usage, it is difficult, and sometimes impossible, to discard, though their dismission would subserve the correction of error, and the advancement of truth. But, while we consent, in the present instance, to use the common phraseology, and to speak of ideas as objects of mental perception, we would not be understood to signify, that an idea is anything distinct from the mind itself but merely a

state of its existence, or a modification of its being. To consider perceptions, imaginations, remembrances, ideas, notions, or passions as distinct from the mind, is equally absurd, as to consider length, breadth, or thickness, motion or rest, attraction or repulsion, as things existing separate from matter. Now, if by "ideas", the Materialist means to signify, that images, divisible and occupying space, exist in the mind, as distinct from itself, we deny the existence of such images. If ideas be mere states or affections of mind, they are as little susceptible of division, as rest or motion, attraction or repulsion, rarefaction or condensation. A substance is now in a solid, next in a fluid, and next in a gaseous form. The substance in these several states is divisible; but can divisibility be predicated of the states or affections themselves? We may have an idea of the half of an object; but I apprehend, that we cannot have half an idea in any other sense than as having an imperfect idea.

But 2dly, let us admit the ideas or images to be divisible; it follows, that they have magnitude and figure; we must therefore have long ideas, and short ideas, round ideas, and square ideas, ideas triangular, elliptical,

and hexagonal. Nay, they must have weight; and, *cæteris paribus*, we may estimate the number of a man's ideas by his gravity. This would, in many cases, be wonderfully convenient. Has the Materialist ever perceived these images? Has he learned their existence from sense, from consciousness, or from reflection? It is for him to explain how, or where, he has discovered them. If he refer us to the images on the retina, we deny the image, which is merely a requisite of sensation, to be an idea; and we ask, where are to be found the images of love and hatred, hope and fear, sound and smell?

Do we then, it may be asked, mean to assert, that ideas are not divisible? Having denied the existence of ideas, or images, as existing distinct from the mind, it is unnecessary for us to add, that we deny their divisibility. But, even admitting their existence as distinct objects of thought, we cannot consider them as divisible in any sense analogous to that, in which we ascribe divisibility to a material substance. In order to illustrate our notion on this subject, we shall adduce an example, taken from our perception of a visible object; and if the doctrine of divisibility be found not tenable in ideas

of sight, it must be still less defensible in cases of sound, taste, or smell.

When an object is presented to the eye, the painting, for example, of a landscape, the rays proceeding from it fall on the retina, and by mere sense we become conscious of nothing more, than a certain quantity of light and shade. By a short mental process, which it is unnecessary to explain, we perceive the landscape to be a representation of hill and dale, wood and water, interspersed, perhaps, with living and artificial productions. The perception, however, of the whole is yet indistinct. In order to obtain a clear and correct view of the piece, we fix our attention on a single part, for example, the water; then we proceed to the wood; then, perhaps, to the hill; and then to the dale; and so in succession; until our eye has traversed the whole, and examined individually the several parts. It is in this way, and this only, that we are enabled to form, what is termed a clear idea of the landscape. And, when it is presented afterwards to us by memory, the same process takes place. The mind may dwell for some time on any part of it, or it may run over the whole at once, as the eye did, at one glance. But it is, in fact, not one simultaneous conception of a

variety of objects, but the rapid transition of the mind itself, from one to another, so that they seem to be but one idea. This review of the several parts, recollected separately, is not a division of the whole, any more than the transition of the imagination from a river in one country, to a mountain in another, would constitute a division of two things, of themselves quite distinct. As we may move the eye rapidly from one side of a prospect to another, or may move it slowly, pausing as we proceed, so we may rapidly and softly draw the finger across a board, so that it shall seem but one sensation; or press it hard and move it slowly, at several intervals, so that we shall be conscious of repeated sensations: but in none of these cases, I presume, can we be said to have only one sensation, and that divisible. And, when the sensations are recollected, the ideas can be nothing, but the sensations at second hand. In fact, there can be no such thing as a complex or compound idea, if by that is meant the strictly simultaneous conception or apprehension of different objects, or a simultaneous representation of past perceptions. We may say, we have an idea of a house; but does such an idea as *one* simultaneously exist? The mind may pass, and does pass,

with such rapidity from one part to another, that they seem but one; but the conceptions are as different, as a door from a window, or both from the roof. And, when the association is not familiar to us, we experience the ideas to be quite distinct. This is the case, in what are termed mixed modes, or when the ideas, not being naturally associated, have not been familiar by frequent occurrence. It is as impossible for a complex idea, which implies a plurality of images, to exist simultaneously, though they may follow in so rapid succession, as to appear simultaneous, as it is for the eye to see at once one page, one line, or even one word, of a book. Familiarity with the word, indeed, may incline us to believe, that the letters simultaneously present themselves to the eye; but that this is not the fact is evident; because, when we learned to read that word, we were obliged to proceed from letter to letter; and all we gain by a repetition of the process is quickness, or expedition. When we speak, therefore, of dividing a compound, or complex, idea, nothing more can be signified, than that the mind passes from one conception to another, and continuing, as it proceeds, for a shorter or longer space, in each individual

modification of its state. The mind *distinguishes*, but does not *divide*. To suppose, indeed, that we dissect a complex idea into its component parts, in much the same way, as we divide, by a pair of scissors, the various counties of England in a map, is ridiculous and absurd. Yet such division is necessary to the validity of the Materialist's argument.

If ideas exist as distinct objects of thought, and not as modifications of the mind itself, and are divisible, having extension, whence the Materialist infers, that they belong to a material substance, it is evident, that they must exist, either within, or without, the brain. The matter of the idea is either part of the brain, or it is not. If the former of these alternatives is maintained, the question then is, does the brain divide part of itself? This indeed would be a marvellous operation! If it is not part of the brain, but distinct from it, being divisible by a material substance, we are naturally prompted to ask, 1st, in what part of the head these extended ideas are lodged, and where they find room; and, 2dly, how a soft medullary substance can be capable of dividing them. He will not surely reply, that, though the brain is material, the idea, having a separate existence,

may be immaterial: this would be to subvert his own argument. For, if the idea be immaterial, according to his own hypothesis, it must be indivisible, but he assumes it to be divisible. And in the next place, how can he, consistently with one of his leading positions, maintain, that a material can act upon an immaterial substance? He denies the possibility of such agency, the thing acting, and the thing acted upon, having no common property. And, if ideas are divisible, having extension and parts, we repeat, what has been already remarked, that they must have length, and breadth, if not thickness also, some being square, some triangular, some circular, some, perhaps, of the higher order being hexagonal, or heptagonal. Thus, it is evident, that, if the idea exist in the brain itself, making part of it, and be divisible, then it follows, that the brain divides part of itself; if it has a separate existence, and is divisible into parts, it must be material, and it will be for the Materialist to say, 1st, where our multiplied ideas, all having extension, are lodged. 2dly, If room were found for them, how a soft medullary substance can be capable of dissecting them. The argument, therefore, founded in the di-

visibility of our ideas, militates against the doctrine, which it is offered to support, and in favour of that, which it is intended to subvert. For, if material, and as composed of parts, divisible, they must occupy space, and the brain be incapable of holding them; and, if its capacity were conceded, must, from its materials and texture, be incapable of dividing them. And, if the ideas are not divisible, as we contend, that they are not, then, by the argument of the Materialist, they must exist in an indivisible subject, and our conclusion follows, as a necessary consequence.

6thly, The Materialist argues, that every thing is known by its properties; and, if any thing lose its properties, it is nothing. In all cases, it is said, of perfect sleep, of apoplexy, drowning, and all leipothymic affections, there is neither perception, nor memory, nor judgment; the properties of the soul are gone, therefore the soul loses its existence. But Immaterialists generally suppose the soul to be immortal, because it is immaterial. But, as the soul, in certain cases, ceases to exist, it cannot be immortal; and therefore is not immaterial *.

* Cooper's Tracts.

This argument assumes, what the Immaterialist will not concede; and, if it proved any thing, would prove too much. Take, it is said, from the soul perception, memory, and judgment, and the soul is gone; take, we answer, from matter length, breadth, and thickness, and matter is gone. Does it follow, that matter has no existence? But it is urged, that Immaterialists generally believe that the soul is immortal; and do not Materialists contend, that matter is imperishable? The Immaterialist does not affirm, that the soul is necessarily immortal, because it is immaterial; but, as he believes that matter is naturally imperishable, and can be annihilated only by its Creator, so he is persuaded, that the soul, if immaterial, is naturally immortal, being destructible only by the Author of its being *.

But the argument of the Materialist fur-

* When Clarke asserts, that it exceeds the power of Deity to destroy an indiscerptible substance, he indulges in arrogance highly reprehensible. Whatever the Author of nature created, His power can destroy. It excites the most profound regret and sorrow, to see men, whose piety we dare not suspect, rashly presuming to prescribe bounds to the intelligence and power of the Almighty Creator and Ruler of the world.

nishes a singular specimen of logical acumen. We shall first concede his premises to be true, and look at his conclusion. He says, the soul is believed to be immortal, because it is immaterial; but the soul is not immortal, therefore it is not immaterial. This is the purport of his reasoning, and nothing more illogical can well be conceived. It would, indeed, be a novel principle in philosophic reasoning, that a cause can have no existence, unless it is accompanied with what we suppose to be its probable effect. Immortality is hoped for, as a consequence of immateriality; but there is no immortality, therefore no immateriality. The argument is fallacious. It can have no weight, unless the author can shew, that certainty and hope are one and the same feeling, and rest on the same evidence. If these two states of being were mutually and necessarily connected, so that neither could exist without the other, the pertinency of the argument and its validity would be acknowledged; but until the Immaterialist shall affirm, that immortality is the necessary consequence, not the probable attendant, of immateriality, the argument is irrelevant; and until the Materialist can prove that, if an assumed cause does not

produce one probable effect, that cause can have no existence, his reasoning may be pronounced to be vicious in the extreme. If B is anticipated as the probable effect of A, it does not follow, that, because B does not result, A has no existence. The soul may be immaterial, and not necessarily immortal; for the same Power, that created, may also annihilate it. The argument, we repeat, is radically vicious.

But let us examine his premises. How does he prove that the soul is mortal? By assuming, that in leipothymic affections its powers and properties being gone, it loses its existence, and becomes extinct. The assumption is questionable, if not false; the conclusion, therefore, is either doubtful, or erroneous. There are various mental phenomena, which would incline us to an opinion, the reverse of that, on which the author institutes his argument. We know, that to consciousness, perception, and memory, attention is necessary; and where this faculty is not awake, that the mind is impercipient. We think frequently, and are not conscious of it; impressions are made on our senses, of which we are not sensible, and of which we have no recollection. Sounds

reach the ear, which we hear not; objects meet the eye, but we do not perceive them; and we sit and walk, without being conscious of the sensations of resistance, of hardness, or of softness—unless our attention be called to them by some unusual occurrences. Of these sensations we have no recollection. We dream of circumstances, of which the events neither of the preceding day, nor of years preceding, nay of circumstances, to which no sentiment, no conception, no fact of our past life has any discoverable relation. Unless, then, we believe, that sentiments, and ideas arise spontaneously, having no cause, which supposition would involve an absurdity, or that they are suggested by spirits, or aerial beings, a hypothesis, which the Materialist would certainly ridicule; we must believe, that these new ideas, and combinations, which present themselves in dreaming, have been suggested by a previous train of thought, which, having made no strong impression on the memory, is forgotten in the morning *. It is therefore not im-

* It seems unquestionable, that, when we are asleep, consciousness is not always entirely suspended. The senses, and the power of volition, are generally, if not in all cases, more or less awake. A person asleep will turn his eyes from a lighted candle, presented before them; and if a limb lies in

probable, much less impossible, that, in leipothymic affections, the mind may be occu-

an uneasy posture, he will change its position. He would err, if he concluded, because in the morning, when he awakes, he has no recollection of the facts, that he lay insensible during the whole night. There are also phenomena, which would lead us to suppose, that we have some consciousness of the lapse of time *.

The arguments offered by Mr. Locke, to prove, that the soul does not always think, are most conclusively answered by Dr. Watts. It is argued, that, if we think in our sleep, without remembering it, we think in vain. It is answered, that, if all our forgotten thoughts are vain, many of our waking thoughts are also equally vain. Does it therefore follow, that we never had these thoughts? †

It is argued, that, "as we fall asleep, we seem gradually to approach to a state of insensibility; it is therefore probable, that at length we arrive at it." It is answered, that, "if, by insensibility, be meant incogitation, the phenomenon is denied; and that the same kind of argument may prove, that matter may be annihilated by continual division." ‡

It is argued, that, if a man thinks without knowing it, the sleeping and waking man are two different persons §.

It is answered, that by *knowing it*, the author must, consistently with his purpose, mean *remembering it*; they cannot, therefore, by Locke's own hypothesis, be different persons ||.

* Bertrand, Du Somnambulisme.

† Locke's Essay, book 2, ch. i., 14.

‡ Doddridge's Lectures, p. 25.

§ Locke's Essay, book 2, ch. i., 12.

|| Doddridge's Lectures, p. 26.

pied in thinking, though we are not conscious of our thoughts, or have any remembrance of their existence.

The phenomena of somnambulism lead to a similar conclusion. The somnambulist, unaided by sight, walks, and reads, and writes, nay, has been known to climb, where there was danger in every step, and where he had never trodden before. There is a well authenticated instance of a person preaching in his sleep audibly and intelligibly; and the story of the French student, attested by the Archbishop of Bourdeaux, who read and wrote sermons in his sleep, is too well known to require repetition here *. This however is not the only example which might be adduced in evidence of the same remarkable fact; yet those persons have often no recollection of their minds being so occupied. These facts conduct to very interesting spe-

* French Encyclopedie, Art. *Noctambule.* Several facts, equally extraordinary, and apparently well attested, might be adduced to shew, not only that we may reason in our sleep, but even write and talk, without the least recollection of the facts when we awake. One striking instance of a person, who used to converse when asleep, came under the author's own observation *.

* See Bertrand, Du Somnambulisme.

culations. If they do not establish the hypothesis, that, after certain mental acquirements, the instrumentality of the sensorial organs is not necessary to perception, they unquestionably shew, that we may think and act without remembering what we said, or did; and that we are not therefore to conclude the absence of thought in a swoon, from the absence of recollection afterwards.

"In every moment of our existence," says Dr. Js. Hutton, "the mind is continually employed, either in one way, or another. The evidence of this proposition arises from our consciousness. Nobody can divest himself of thought, not even for a moment; and no argument against the proposition can, with reason, be drawn from certain periods of time past; during which, no recollection of any thought can be made: for it is a thing undoubted, that, after an hour elapses, a very small portion of our past thoughts are recollected. Therefore to allege, that during a particular period the mind has not thought, because we have no recollection of it, would be the same as if it should be alleged, that, during certain periods of our past life, we had not existed, because we cannot recol-

lect where we had been at the time."* But if it were unquestionably true, that, in leipothymic affections, the mental powers are wholly suspended, unless we consider the suspension of a faculty as equivalent to its absolute destruction, we are not justified in concluding, that the faculty is annihilated, or its subject reduced to a non-entity. Mr. Cooper indeed contends, that, by the suspension of a faculty, nothing else can be meant, than a temporary non-existence. We think otherwise. A cause may be opposed to the operation of a power, which prevents its action; but, as soon as the cause is removed, the power renews its agency. Were it reduced to a state of non-existence, how short soever might be the period, it must be created anew. Relief from suspension requires no reproduction.

SECTION IV.

Arguments for Materialism continued.

7THLY, It is said to be "an unfortunate circumstance" for the advocates of immaterialism, that they cannot affirm anything positive

* Hutton's Investigation into the Principles of Knowledge, Vol. I. 241.

of the soul*. It is represented, say the Materialists, as a negation of all properties, of which we have any idea. We can form, they object, no conception of its character.

This the Immaterialist pronounces to be, indeed, an unfortunate argument for his opponent to advance. In the first place, it is not true, that the soul is represented to be a negation of all properties, of which we have any idea. It is a negation only of all sensible, or material, properties. Here is a palpable misrepresentation of the hypothesis. In the next place, will the Immaterialist venture to affirm, or can he be so ignorant as to believe, that we have no notion of perception, of consciousness, of memory, of reason? no notion of love or hatred, hope or fear? Or will he reply, that these are mere properties, powers, or affections, and not the soul itself? We ask, what are attraction and repulsion, length, breadth, and thickness, figure, and magnitude? What are they but qualities? Are they matter itself. Let him explain to us, what matter is without these qualities, and the Immaterialist will engage to explain, what the soul is, without perceptions and passions. We know as much of mind, as

* Cooper's Tracts, p. 213.

we do of matter. I may doubt of the existence of material substance, but I cannot doubt, that I feel, remember, and think. We have, or may have, as clear apprehensions of the powers and properties of the mind, as of those of body.

I am aware, that the truth of this observation may appear questionable. It has, indeed, been expressly denied by an anonymous author, who published an answer to Rennel, on the subject of Materialism, and who certainly evinces no ordinary share of logical acuteness. Urging it as an objection to the doctrine of Immaterialism, that we have no distinct conception of the soul, he observes, that, "when we touch an apple, we do not only see and touch solidity, but we see and touch a body solid; and, though we do not know the size and figure of the constituent *moleculæ*, yet there is a *substratum* evident to our senses; but in the case of our mind, we are not only ignorant of the composition and nature of the *substratum*, but its existence is contradicted by all our senses." The fallacies here involved are too obvious, to escape the detection of the metaphysical reader. His argument assumes, 1st, that "a *substratum* is evident to our senses." 2dly, That what is not perceptible to sense, can

have no existence. 3dly, involves the contradiction, that a simple substance is compounded; and 4thly, the erroneous notion, that to be contradicted by sense, and to be not attested by sense, are one and the same thing.

1st, When he speaks of a *substratum*, he must understand *that*, in which qualities inhere; a substance, or something, to which they belong, apprehended, or at least spoken of, as existing by itself. Now, when he perceives an external object, what does he see? An expanse of light and shade. Is this a *substratum?* What does he feel? Heat or cold, pain or pleasure, or perhaps resistance. Is any of these feelings, or these qualities, a *substratum?* Is magnitude, or figure, length, breadth, and thickness a *substratum?* They are qualities; and when these qualities are abstracted, where is his *substratum?* Nay, is it quite certain, that his hand ever came into contact with the external body, or that any two particles of matter are in actual contact?

2dly, He assumes, that, what is not perceptible to sense cannot exist. The Immaterialist will not be disposed to concede this assumption. He will contend, that, as we refer qualities perceptible by sense to material substances, we are justified in referring

qualities not perceptible by sense, but known by consciousness, and of a character wholly dissimilar, to a dissimilar substance. If he says, that figure, magnitude, and motion belong to matter, he ascribes judgment, reasoning, and volition, which bear no affinity to these, to something, which is not matter. And he contends, that of either *substratum*, as independent on its qualities, we are equally ignorant, and know nothing. In short, the argument of the author, as of all other Materialists, amounts to this; the soul is not an object of sense, and therefore does not exist. This is truly the sum and substance of his reasoning. With equal truth might he deny the existence of intellect, of memory, of reason, of hope, or of fear, for they are neither visible nor tangible.

3dly, He tells us, that we are ignorant of the composition of the soul. We ask him, by whom has he been told, or whence has he learned, that the soul is compounded? We maintain no such doctrine. This is not the hypothesis of the Immaterialist. To object, that we do not know the composition, of what we believe and contend to be simple and uncompounded, is indeed a singular mode of refuting an adversary. But, as the author rejects the doctrine of an immaterial soul,

because we cannot tell him of what a simple substance is composed, we take the liberty to ask him, of what is body composed. He will answer, "of matter." Well, of what is matter composed? We request an answer to this question. He surely will not reply, that it is composed of material particles, for this would be to tell us, that it is composed of itself. How prone we are, in the ardor of controversy, inconsiderately to employ an argument, which recoils upon ourselves! With body we are acquainted; of matter, of which body is composed, we know nothing. Yet the Materialist assumes matter to be a subject, which he perfectly comprehends.

4thly, The author assumes, that whatever is not attested by sense, is contradicted by sense. This is to maintain, that the absence of experience is one and the same thing with contradiction by experience. The falsity of this notion, has, we trust, been sufficiently exposed. The objection, therefore, may be dismissed, as not only founded on an assumption, evidently gratuitous, but also involving error and absurdity.

8thly, It is argued, by some Materialists, that all our ideas are derived from sense, and that sense informs us of material objects only;

we can therefore have no idea of an immaterial substance. This argument is in fact much the same with the preceding.

If by the term *idea* be meant every object of thought, the assertion, that we have no idea of any, but a material object, is not true. We can think of pride, envy, benevolence, pain, pleasure, memory, reason and every other affection and faculty of the mind. The Materialist will reply, that these are not substances, but qualities, properties, and powers. True; and what are length, breadth and thickness, hardness and softness, attraction and repulsion, but qualities, properties, and powers? And is it not from the properties of matter, as affecting his senses, that he forms an idea of matter, as an object of thought; and may not the Immaterialist form as clear a notion of hope and of fear, as of attraction and repulsion; of consciousness and volition, as of rest and motion? Neither mind nor matter can be apprehended without qualities; and of each, as a mere substratum, we are equally ignorant, and equally incapable of forming a conception.

But if by *idea* be meant what is termed an image or representation of a sensible impression, the proposition of the Materialist

is true; but it amounts to nothing. It is merely to say, that all our ideas of sensation are derived from sense, and that we can have no idea of a sensible object, but what is furnished by sense. This proposition no one will controvert. And, if we assert the existence of a substance, wholly different from matter, as possessing entirely different properties, and therefore neither visible nor tangible, is it not extreme ignorance to argue, that it cannot exist, because it is not an object of sense, or because we can have no idea of it, as not possessing sensible properties? To expect, that we should have an idea, image, or picture, in the mind, of what is not a sensible object, is absurd; and to argue hence to its non-existence is as ridiculous, as for a blind man to argue against colour, because it is not perceptible by the sense of smell. I will add one observation, and then dismiss the objection.

It is a supposition, perfectly conceivable, that a being might exist, possessing only three of our senses, hearing, tasting, and smelling. Will the Materialist explain to us, what idea he could form of matter? Will he maintain, that such a being could form any idea of material substance? Yet

matter would exist, and produce organic affections; but, if the author's objection be valid, matter could have no existence, because it would be impossible for the being supposed to picture it in his mind. The fact is, that the Materialist cannot divest himself of the prejudice, that, what is not an object of sense, and capable of being delineated in imagination, can have no existence. Hence almost all his arguments resolve themselves into the assumption, that, if mind be neither visible nor tangible, it is nothing.

9thly, It is contended, that a being simple and indiscerptible is also immutable, and that the faculties, which we ascribe to the soul, are subject to change. This is a gratuitous assertion, and may be opposed by a negation. Whence has the Materialist learned, that a simple indiscerptible substance is immutable? Does its susceptibility of change imply a contradiction, so that to alter its mode of existence would be impossible to Omnipotence? We acknowledge no being, to whom absolute immutability belongs, but the Author of all existence, whom we believe to be eternally the same. Let it be observed also, that the faculties of the soul, to what-

ever modifications they may be subject, are still the same faculties; it is in their modes only, that they are susceptible of alteration.

10thly, The Materialist contends, that we have the same evidence, if it be evidence, that brutes have souls, as we have, that men have souls. Brutes, it is said, feel, perceive, remember, reason; and, in descending from the sagacious elephant, to the insect crawling on the ground, where are we to stop, in acknowledging the existence of an immaterial principle? Is it common to all animals, or is it peculiar to one species, or a few?

It is, and must be, acknowledged, that many of the arguments, adduced to prove the immateriality of the thinking principle in man, are applicable also to several species of the brute creation, and would equally prove, that the sentient and percipient principle in them also is immaterial. But the Immaterialist contends, that, if the arguments in favour of an immaterial principle in man, are sufficient to prove its existence, our ignorance, how far this principle is extended beyond the human species, if extended at all, cannot weaken our belief in a fact evinced to be highly probable, or morally certain.

Extremes in nature and art are often so blended, running imperceptibly one into the other, that it becomes impossible to discern the line of separation; yet we question not the existence of the extremes. It may be difficult to draw the precise line, which divides the vegetable from the animal world; but our ignorance of the limit does not set aside the distinction. We may not be able to say, whether certain zoophytes should be classed among vegetables or animals, or whether they should be regarded as a distinct class; but no one can be at a loss to perceive, that there exists an immense difference between an Aristotle or a Newton, and a clod of earth, between the sagacity of a Bacon, and the capacity of a snail. In the vast chain of being there may be but little difference perceptible between two contiguous links, while the difference between the extremes is almost infinite. There may therefore be an immaterial principle in some, though not in all, of the inferior animals. This we say is possible. But ignorance of the limit, by which a quality is bounded, furnishes no argument against its existence. The Materialist knows, that man is a rational being. He believes, or has reason to believe,

that a portion of reason belongs to some of the inferior creation. In examining the scale of animal nature from the zoophyte, or the oyster, up to man, can he draw the line, which separates pure instinct from the lowest degree of art, or name the species, in which reason, as we descend, ceases, or in which, ascending it begins to exist? Does he, because he is incapable of this discrimination, therefore, deny, that man is a rational being, or that he is endowed with intelligence?

That many of the brute creation, and numbers of insect tribes* display something, which resembles, in its effects, human art and human ingenuity, is certain. But whether they act *by* intelligence, or *with* intelligence, is a question, which we cannot resolve, but which serves to teach us how incomprehensible to us are the "works and ways of God," and how little we know of the mysteries of nature. What may be the designs of the Great Parent of all being, respecting the inferior creation, whether the present is to be the whole of their existence, or whether they

* It was remarked by Bonnet, that, in order to learn the instinctive constitution of an insect, we ought to be able to spend some time in the head of the animal, without being that animal.

may yet have other purposes to answer even on this earth, than appear to us, we are wholly ignorant. This, however, we may venture to affirm, that, if we have in the phenomena of the human mind evidence sufficient to convince us, that there must be in man a principle not material, which perceives, thinks and wills, it cannot weaken our conviction, were it absolutely certain, that an immaterial principle exists in none, in some, or in all, of the inferior creation.

It is a hypothesis, advocated by some philosophers of distinguished eminence, and in which we perceive no improbability, that the great agent in nature, under the ordination, or continual direction, of a Supreme Intelligent power, is an immaterial principle, the source, or immediate cause, of all motion, of all life, vegetative and animal, and of all intellectual capacity and energy. As the cause of motion it has been designated by one celebrated metaphysician the *elemental mind.* This is the lowest order of its being. As the cause of vegetation, he has termed it the vegetative, and of animation, the animal mind, corresponding to the ψυχη of the Greek philosophy. As the principle of intelligence, he has named it the intellectual

mind, answering to the term νους of the ancient metaphysicians. Whatever impropriety there may be in employing the term *mind* to denote the source of motion, and that also of vegetative and animal life, we confidently affirm, that this hypothesis is in principle far more rational, than that, which would exclude every thing from the universe, but material substance.

An eminent physiologist has, with an air of derision, enquired *, at what period of life is this immaterial principle infused? Is it communicated to the *fœtus in utero*, or is it imparted immediately after birth, or when is it inspired? This is truly a feeble and captious argument. Are we to doubt, that a substance, or an attribute, exists, because we cannot fix the precise time, when it began to exist? Can the Materialist tell us the precise time, when an infant begins to hear? when an atom becomes animalized? the precise point of time, when life is extinct, and decomposition begins? If we have sufficient ground for believing, that a substance, or energy, exists, our ignorance of its commencement cannot shake that belief. If the union of an immaterial principle to a ma-

terial substance be a probable hypothesis, it is irrational in the extreme to deny its truth, because we know not, at what time this union takes place. Is this the only secret in nature, which it baffles the understanding of the Materialist to explore? Or does he expect to have ocular evidence of a fact, which the nature of the subject necessarily precludes?

But we will not thus dismiss the objection. It involves the absurdity, which we have already endeavoured to expose. By ascribing material properties to an immaterial substance, the objection is founded in self-contradiction. It would disprove the existence of an immaterial principle, by enquiring, when it becomes material. It is as absurd to speak of mind being infused, or of mind moving and entering the body, as it is to speak of body thinking, of smell being heard, or sound tasted.

How the soul and the body are united, or the principle of their mutual agency, the Immaterialist does not profess to know. Here, as in every other instance, our sagacity cannot penetrate beyond the phenomena, and their modes of succession. We are surrounded with facts innumerable, the laws of which we can investigate, while the principle

of production eludes all our researches. Encompassed, as has been already observed, with matter and its forms, all our perceptions are of sensible objects; and all our language is accommodated to these perceptions. To reason from matter to mind, or to argue from expressions to facts, in our enquiries into this subject, is unphilosophical and absurd. We speak of mind as solid, as acute, as profound, as obtuse, as capacious, as subject to distractions, to oscitancies, to excentricities, to obliquities, to vacillations. What are all these, but expressions of material qualities, and properties, obviously inapplicable, unless in a figurative sense, to an intellectual principle? Immaterial beings belong to a rank of natures, totally different from matter. Theirs is a mode of existence, of which the surrounding objects, in which our senses are immersed, can furnish no conception. We reclaim, therefore, against all such questions, as, "when is the soul infused?" "what part of the brain does it occupy?" as irrelevant, and quite absurd.

But the Materialist cannot argue on any other supposition, than that nothing but matter can exist; and though the Immaterialist repeats again and again, that the immaterial principle has no resemblance to

matter, and that the character, which he assigns to it, is merely that it cannot be material, without professing to know any thing of its essence, but only its properties, the Materialist will still cavil, on the supposition, that it is material; and disputes its existence, unless it have the qualities, which the very hypothesis excludes, of a physical or material substance. But that our opponent may not complain of receiving no answer to his question, we will not name the time, when the immaterial principle is *infused*, because we believe in no *infusion*; but, if *he* will inform us of the precise time, when sensation begins, the Immaterialist will, in turn, acquaint him, when the mind begins to exist.

SECTION V.

Arguments for Materialism continued.

11THLY, It is objected, that Immaterialists entertain different opinions, respecting the nature of the soul, some believing it to be purely an immaterial substance, others supposing it to have extension and locality. Now, this objection might be urged with some degree of consistency and force, if Materialists were themselves agreed in their

notions of matter. But, while we find them affirming opinions, on this subject, apparently as paradoxical, as they are mutually irreconcileable, it is surely rather an indiscretion and boldness in them, to object to Immaterialists their discordant hypotheses. We enquire of our opponents, what is matter? We go to one, and he tells us, that it is solid and impenetrable; another assures us, that this is quite a vulgar error, for that matter is nothing, but mere points of attraction and repulsion. One tells us, that it is inert; another, that it is essentially active, being never at rest, but when its energy is counteracted by a superior force. One tells us, that it is infinitely divisible; another denies this, and contends, that there are elementary atoms, incapable of division. One assures us, that it is composed of indivisible points; another affirms, that this is absurd, for that an indivisible point must be nothing. If Materialists entertain such contradictory opinions of the nature of matter, though it be accessible to the cognizance of sense, it is not surprising, if Immaterialists are not agreed concerning the nature of the soul, whose existence and properties are deducible only from mental phenomena, less open to observation, and of more

difficult research. This objection, then, recoils on the Materialist, and avails him nothing.

12th, "There is no known cause of perception," says Mr. Cooper, "without a brain, or some such structure, that is to answer the same end. This is a fact indisputable."* This argument amounts to nothing. If it have any weight, it militates against the author's own hypothesis. If the brain, it is said, be not the cause of perception, there is no other known cause. We reply; In the first place, if by *cause* be meant all the antecedent circumstances essential to the effect, the brain is not the cause of perception; the presence of an external object, and an affection of one of the organs of sense, being, previously to any perception, absolutely necessary to the result. 2dly, If the brain, according to the author's opinion, be the cause of perception, can it be also the percipient? How is this possible? Unless he can shew, that the cause of the perception is identical with the perceiving being, and thus persuade us to believe a manifest absurdity,—unless he can prove, that the brain is the subject, and not the medium of perception, the percipient, and not the instru-

* Essays, p. 210.

ment,—his argument is not only nugatory, but is at variance with his hypothesis.

13th, "It is also," says the same writer, "indisputable, that every motion of the brain when perceived, is attended with the existence of an idea; and, as we are in no case acquainted with any intermediate process, by means of which, this perceived motion of the brain occasions an idea; they are, as far as we know, identical."* This he pronounces to be "the true notion of an idea."

When the author speaks of a perceived motion in the brain, the question naturally occurs, by whom is this motion perceived? Who, or what, is the percipient? Can the brain, a soft, pulpy, half fibrous mass, contemplate its own operations? Is not such a notion too monstrous for belief?

The author seems to feel the force of this objection; but contends, that the same difficulty accompanies the hypothesis of Immaterialism, by which the soul is represented as contemplating itself. That the soul has the capacity of surveying and reviewing its own operations, is a fact; and it is the palpable extravagance of the notion, that a piece of

* Essays, p. 210.

medullary matter can contemplate itself, and convert motion into an idea,—it is this, among other incredibilities, that reduces the Immaterialist to the necessity of believing, that the thinking substance cannot be material, and that its properties and powers have no resemblance to those of matter.

When the author tells us, that the true notion of an idea, is that of motion perceived, we startle at the assertion, and are tempted to ask, if this be true, what is false? Motion, which *everywhere else*, though indefinitely modified, can be nothing but motion, becomes *in the brain* identical with an idea. Transubstantiation itself is not more marvellous than this transmutation. This paradoxical hypothesis we shall soon have occasion to examine.

These are the principal objections to the doctrine of immaterialism. The reader, on reviewing them, will find, that the 1st proceeds on a *petitio principii*. It assumes, that nothing but matter can exist, and with this assumption, absurdly appeals to induction, where induction, by the very assumption, becomes impossible. The 2d equally begs the question. When it takes it for granted that, whatever has no extension,

and does not occupy place, can have no existence, it assumes, that nothing but material substance can exist. It involves also a contradiction, arguing, that a thing cannot be what it is, because it is not its contrary. The same observation is applicable to the 3d. The 4th involves a position not universally true, and therefore not conclusive in favour of materialism, until the Materialist shall shew, that the limitation acknowledged by himself is inadmissible in the present discussion. The 5th assumes, that ideas have extension, and are divisible. The assumption is false, and involves the Materialist himself in inextricable difficulties. The 6th assumes, in opposition to facts, which lead to a contrary conclusion, that the powers of the soul are, in certain cases, suspended; and confounds suspension as a state identical with non-existence. The 7th asserts a falsity. It represents an immaterial soul to be a negation of all properties; whereas it is a negation of only material properties. The 8th involves the error of supposing, that because we have no image, or idea, of the soul not being a sensible object, we have therefore no notion of it. The 9th is a mere assertion,

which we deny. The 10th is an attempt at a *reductio ad absurdum*, and has no weight; the extension of an immaterial principle, if it be extended to any of the inferior creation, concluding nothing against its existence in man. The 11th may be retorted with equal force against the Materialist. The 12th, while it proves nothing more than that the brain is necessary to perception, is at variance with the author's own hypothesis. It reduces him to a dilemma, from which no ingenuity can effect his escape. By presuming a percipient, his argument implies either, that a soft, medullary mass perceives its own motions, or that there exists a percipient being, distinct from the brain. The former hypothesis seems too ridiculous for belief; the latter is the doctrine of the Immaterialist. The 13th maintaining that motion is identical with an idea, is an absurdity, which we shall afterwards have occasion to expose. Of these objections there is not one, which does not assume, either that, what is not matter, and subject to its laws, must be a nonentity; or that, because we have no image or idea of an immaterial substance, we have no notion of it, and therefore it

does not exist; or which does not involve the absurdity, that the organ and the agent are one and the same thing.

It has been sneeringly observed, that an immaterial principle is not to be detected amidst the blood and bones of a dissecting room. Mr. Lawrence doubtless considered this to be a palmary argument against the possibility of its existence. If any of his auditors were likely to apprehend that some spectral form might start from under his knife, capable, as it might be, of "dividing asunder between soul and spirit," it was his duty certainly to calm their fears. A spiritual apparition in a dissecting room might be an unwelcome visitor. Spectres, as Addison remarks, have unnerved the courage and palsied the arm of men, who dreaded not the cannon's mouth. But spectres, though aerial, are not immaterial beings; the author, however, we presume, deemed it important for his auditors to be assured, that, what is neither visible nor tangible, could not be detected by the knife of the anatomist. Had he told them that no arguments drawn from physiology, or the structure of the human body, can establish anything beyond the fact, that the organization

of the brain is necessary to the power of thinking, as the eye is to vision; he would have advanced a position not less true, and of somewhat greater philosophical importance. Had he contented himself with observing, what he has repeatedly urged, that the capacity of thought depends on the cerebral organization, as the visual perception is dependent on the greater or less perfection of the visual organ, he would have stated a truth, which is attested by facts, and to which the Immaterialist yields a ready assent. But, if he requires us to conclude, that what we see not exists not, and that what has no sensible quality can be no real substance, we remonstrate against such a deduction as unphilosophical and false. Before we can assent to such a conclusion, he must persuade us to believe, that the perceiving, thinking, willing being is the same with the organ, which is obedient to his will; in other words, that the agent and his instrument are one and the same thing. And we may confidently affirm, that the conclusion, which would be naturally drawn from the subjects in a dissecting room, would be anything, but favourable to the hypothesis of materialism. Let the brain of a human

being be there inspected, and it would occur to the mind of every man to be a physical absurdity, if he were to suppose, that such a congeries of matter could ever demonstrate a proposition in Euclid, investigate the Newtonian theory, or traverse in contemplation the ethereal space. It would require powerful evidence to convince him, unless determined to assent to moral absurdities, rather than believe, that he is not acquainted with all possible modes of being, that such a mass could be capable of such operations, and of other scientific researches equally astonishing.

SECTION VI.

Arguments for Materialism continued.

Some advocates for the hypothesis of Materialism, feeling the weakness of their own arguments, and the force of the preceding objections, have disclaimed the absurdity of asserting, that the brain thinks; and one writer in particular has not hesitated to affirm, that neither Mr. Lawrence, nor any body else, ever asserted, as a simple proposition, that a

medullary substance thinks *.—"Who," says the author, "ever maintained, that an insulated mass of medullary matter had the faculty of thought?" This question, implying a negative answer, is truly extraordinary, in the face of so many express and positive authorities. He must either deny, what he himself, in common with all physiologists, has asserted, respecting the substance of the brain; or he must acknowledge, that he has proposed a question, which betrays an ignorance of the hypothesis, which is supported by almost every Materialist.

"Shall I be told", says Mr. Lawrence, "that thought is inconsistent with matter, that we cannot conceive, how medullary substance can *perceive, remember, judge, reason?* I acknowledge that we are entirely ignorant, how the parts of the brain accomplish these purposes," &c. He proceeds to argue, that our ignorance does not disprove the fact. Words have no meaning, if this quotation furnish not an explicit avowal of the persuasion, that the brain thinks. Has not Dr. Priestley also contended, that the process of thinking is carried on by the brain, not as

* See Do Wylke Edwinsford's Review of "Rennel on Scepticism," p. 101.

the organ of an immaterial substance, but as a system endowed with the power of thinking? The author of "Academical Questions" affirms, that "matter feels, thinks, and reasons." It would be a trespass on the reader's patience, were we to adduce further evidence, to shew, that the author errs in maintaining, that Materialists do not assert, that the brain is the thinking substance. But, as he considers this hypothesis to be so incredible, that neither Mr. Lawrence nor any one else, ever affirmed it, we have in the writer, at least one Materialist, who disclaims the doctrine, as it is generally understood, and would rescue others from the imputation of embracing an opinion, which appears to him so repugnant to reason.

But let us see how the author corrects the supposed misconception, and what explanation he substitutes in its stead. His words are these: "That the brain in its connection, relation, and sympathy with the human organization, produces thought, is far different from the simple abstract proposition, that medullary matter thinks." By *abstract proposition* the author means, we presume, general proposition, expressive of a general fact. Let us enquire into the difference,

which the author would here establish; and how far it subserves the hypothesis of Materialism. A medullary substance, it is said, does not think; for this, it would seem, is too extravagant a proposition for any man to assert: but a medullary substance, "in connection, relation, and sympathy with the human organization produces thought." This is the distinction, which the author presses on our attention. How easy is it to be misled by vague general terms, believing, that we clearly conceive, and correctly express, something wonderfully profound, when our words are either unintelligible, or convey no meaning?

The author accuses Rennel, and insinuates the same imputation against the clergy generally, of resorting to what he terms the *ars botherandi*. Now, while we honestly profess to have no desire to exercise this obnoxious art, we know too well the detrimental influence of obscure, loose, and ambiguous terms, as precluding clear conception and correct judgment, to suffer either the reader, or ourselves, to be deluded into error, by empty sounds, or equivocal names. Organization is either the act of organizing, or the state of being organized. In either case

it is not a substance. What then, we would ask, does the author mean by *sympathy with organization?* Can a substance sympathize with a state, an action, a condition, or a property? Can any thing but substance sympathize with substance? In this, the strict and philosophical sense of the term, the author's observation borders on absurdity. Does he mean, that the brain, by its sympathy with the other organs, produces thought? Sympathy, which is the only specific connection or relation, which the author states, means community of feeling. Are we then to understand, that the brain, sympathizing, or having a fellow feeling and affection with the muscles, the lungs, the liver, the absorbents, is thereby enabled to demonstrate a proposition in Euclid, or the truth of the binomial theorem? or will this sympathy with the sensorial organs explain, or effect, these operations? The affection of the organ is merely physical, and the consequent affection of the brain is merely physical. When we ask then, how this can produce thought, can any rational being be satisfied with being told, that it is by sympathy? Can a name explain a fact? To acknowledge, that the effect is inexplicable is at least, if no defence of the hypothesis, a modest confession of hu-

man ignorance; but to assign sympathy as the cause, is to mock our understanding with an empty sound. Sensation itself, the cerebral effect of organic impression, is not *thought*. To resolve, with some of the ancients, attraction and repulsion into the occult qualities of sympathy and antipathy, φιλια and εχθρα, is, in comparison with this solution, rational and intelligible.

But let us examine the author's own explanation of the hypothesis. He does not assert, that the brain, as an insulated mass of matter, thinks, for this would be too ridiculous to be believed; but he says, that, by its connection, relation and sympathy with the human organization, it produces thought. Let us inquire how far this explanation is satisfactory, as removing the imputation, which the author repels, or as relieving the hypothesis from an apparent absurdity.

The brain, it is said, does not think, but by its sympathy with organization produces thought. Now, if thought is produced by a material substance, this thought must inhere in some subject or other. It must be the thought of some thinking being; for where there is a power, or a quality, there must be a substance; and where there is an act, there must be an agent. Who is that being? Is

it the man? Is the thought produced by my brain, my thought? But who, or what, is meant by *my?* Who or what am I? If I am purely a material substance, and thought belongs to that substance, it must belong either to the whole as a system, or to every individual part, or to only a portion of the whole. If to the whole corporeal frame, then every muscle, every bone, every vessel, every sinew, makes part of the thinking substance; and, when a bone is amputated, part of the thinking substance is gone. This is too absurd to be asserted. If the power of thinking belong to every individual part, then there are as many thinking beings as parts. This is equally absurd. If thought be confined to one part, namely, the brain, as a system, the thought produced must be within the brain; on which hypothesis, the brain produces thought within itself, and thinks by its own energy. What then does the author gain by his distinction? His own hypothesis, as he explains it, evidently amounts to one and the same thing, with the generally received opinion, that the brain thinks, the absurdity of which, he affirms to be too great for any man to assert.

ARGUMENTS

IN FAVOUR

OF

IMMATERIALISM.

CHAPTER I.

SECTION I.

We shall now proceed to state the arguments, which have been urged in favour of the doctrine of immaterialism, after offering one preliminary observation. Some metaphysicians have affirmed, while others have reasoned, as if they believed, that there exists in man a principle not only purely immaterial, but also wholly independent for its energies on our corporeal frame. This is to assert a doctrine in direct repugnance to the most incontestable physiological facts. Every person, who gives the least attention to his perceptions and feelings, must be convinced, that his body and his mind are, in the exercise of their faculties, mutually dependent; and that the state of the one is uniformly affected by that of the other. Can

any man feel in himself, or behold in others, the effect produced in the body by any sudden and violent emotion of the mind, how syncope, nervous debility, paralysis, or even a derangement of the digestive powers, disturbs or weakens the energies of the soul, and yet maintain, that the mind is wholly independent on the body? Do we not find with few, if any, exceptions, that the sagacity or instinct of every animal is proportioned to its organization; that, as this is more or less perfect, the powers of the mind are more or less enlarged; that the mental faculties are improved, as the organs are developed; and that they decline, as the brain decays? Does not every instance of insanity evince the mutual sympathy of mind and body? To insist, in defiance of these, and other established facts, that the mind is independent on the body, is one of those extreme and ridiculous errors, which nothing but the blindness of prejudice prevents us from detecting, or pride, combined perhaps with self interest, will not permit us to acknowledge.

The untenable hypothesis, to which we have here adverted, originated, doubtless

partly, in the apprehension, that, if the mind were not wholly independent on matter, the argument for the immortality of the soul would be weakened. But dependence of the mind, for the exercise of its functions, in a certain state of being, is to be distinguished from dependency on body for its existence, or its capacities.

The first argument, which we shall present to the reader, as offered to prove, that there is in man an immaterial substance, which perceives, thinks, and wills, is the consciousness of personal identity.

The body is in a state of perpetual change. It is continually the subject of alternate waste and refection; a portion of its matter being every day expelled, and replaced by other matter; so that in a few years, or perhaps a much shorter space *, not one of its original particles remains within it. During this unceasing change, every individual is conscious of continuing to be one and the same being. How is this unintermitted efflux and influx

* An eminent anatomist, as has been before remarked, delivers it as his opinion, that a human body is completely changed a thousand times in the course of an ordinary life. —*Library of Useful Knowledge*, No. 9.

of the component particles of the brain, and the total change of the whole substance, reconcileable with the conviction of personal identity, on the hypothesis, that the brain is the thinking, conscious being? Can identity consist with perpetual change? Can the perceptions of this day, and those of twenty years ago, be the perceptions of one and the same substance, when not one particle of that substance, which received the impression then, remains in its composition now? Nay, when every particle has been changed a hundred times in that period? The Materialist urges the difficulties, with which the hypothesis of his opponent is embarrassed; but can there be any difficulty less explicable, than to apprehend, how an impression made on the soft substance of the brain can, during the entire changes, which, in substance, it undergoes, be transmitted from one particle, or one mass, to another, even on the extravagant hypothesis, that a type, or an imprint, is literally made on the substance of the brain?

The Materialist replies, that we have no direct evidence, that the whole of the brain is subject to change; and urges the possibility, that some minute portion, sufficient to be

the foundation of personal identity, may remain immutable. The possibility we will not presume to question; there may be some *stamina*, or minute portion, which is exempted from the mutations, to which the other parts are liable; but this is a mere hypothesis. If every other part of our corporeal frame, whether solid or fluid, is subject to alternate absumption and replacement, analogy leads us to conclude, that the whole brain is obedient to the general law.

It is to be observed, also, that, if this immutability of a certain portion of the brain should be admitted and supposed to constitute personal identity, this identity differs from our consciousness of it, as widely as a fact, or state, differs from our knowledge of that fact. The existence of the identity will not account for the conscious feeling of that identity.

The Materialist endeavours to evade the force of this argument by urging, that, though the substance of the brain may be entirely changed, the organization remains the same: and in this sameness of organization is founded the consciousness of personal identity.

We will not contend, with some Immaterialists, that, if this hypothesis were true, it would

follow, that, if two brains were organized alike, they would be only one being; because we apprehend, that numerical difference is perfectly compatible with the consciousness of personal identity, in each of the different subjects. But, as this hypothesis excludes identity of substance, the identity of organization can mean nothing, but identity of structure or form. Here again, though we admit, that personal identity may consist in identity of organization, yet the consciousness of that identity is different from the identity itself. We ask then, who or what has this conscious feeling? Is it the organization? This would be absurd. Is it the brain, or thinking substance? Then the brain, though not one particle is in it now, that was in it twelve months ago, is conscious, notwithstanding this entire change, that it is still the self same brain, because its form is the same. This is equally absurd. Sir John Cutler's stockings *, if they could have been personified, or endowed with thought, might have felt themselves to be still the self same pair, though not a single thread of the original stockings remained in their composi-

* See Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus, Chap. IV.

tion, and this merely because their shape was the same.

Whether then the Materialist, in order to repel the argument of his opponent, would refer the consciousness of personal identity to the brain itself, or only to a portion of it, or simply to its organization, his hypotheses, if not all equally absurd, are equally unsatisfactory, and equally difficult to be reconciled with known facts. The argument therefore, of the Immaterialist, that the consciousness of personal identity appears wholly incompatible with the continual change of the brain, as the subject of this feeling, remains in full force, and seems unanswerable.

The Materialist, we are aware, retorts this argument. He reminds us, that the soul is the subject of unceasing change, experiencing the vicissitudes of hope and fear, joy and sorrow, love and hatred; that our opinions, our wishes, our inclinations and habits, vary with the circumstances in which we are placed; and that there exists not a stronger contrast between debility and strength, ignorance and knowledge, than between the mind of an infant in the nurse's arms, and that of the man enlightened by experience, and improved by culture. How then, he asks, are

these changes reconcileable with the sameness of the soul, or identity of person?

It is answered: a change of condition does not imply a change of substance. A particle of matter may at one time be in a fluid, at another, in a solid, at another, in a gaseous state,—it may be now a part of a pebble, now of an oak, now of a man; but it is still the same particle. Its condition is changed; it exists in different states; but it is substantially the same. So it is with the human mind. We feel ourselves subject to those alternations of passion and feeling, and those changes of opinions and habits, which have been here mentioned; but the mind remains the same; and in all these varieties of affection and sentiment, each individual is conscious, that he continues to be one and the self-same person. The Catholic becomes a Protestant, or the Protestant a Catholic; the infidel a Christian, or the Christian an infidel; the Dogmatist becomes a Sceptic, or the Sceptic a Dogmatist; he, whose soul to-day is like the angry sea, is to-morrow serene and tranquil; yet which of them ever doubted of his own continued identity? The mind has existed in different states; it is still, notwithstanding, the same mind. But the

thinking substance of the Materialist, undergoes a total and substantial change.

2dly, It is affirmed by the Immaterialist, that we are conscious of the simplicity and indivisibility of the human soul. Every man feels himself, as a thinking being, to be one simple indivisible substance. But divisibility is one of the characteristic properties of matter; the soul therefore cannot be material.

The Materialist denies this position, and maintains, that our consciousness is limited to what we perceive, and what we do, and cannot possibly extend to what we are. This, he contends, can be learned from no intuitive feeling, but by inference from facts*. The ingenious philosopher, and acute Metaphysician, who asserted this opinion, surely believed, that, amidst the various changes which he underwent, physical and intellectual, he continued to be one and the same person. Was this belief founded in an inference from facts? The negative may be confidently affirmed. A deduction implies a judgment; it is the statement of a proposition; but I can form no judgment without previously assuming the unity and identity

* Priestley's Correspondence with Price, pp. 282 and 403.

of my being—that he, who conceives the subject is the same person with him, who conceives the predicate, and the same with him who joins, or disjoins, them. How the author could draw an inference from any facts, without presuming his identity, is utterly inconceivable. We are equally at a loss to form any notion of the facts, to which he would allude. Memory and consciousness, are necessary to the feeling of personal identity. I remember a past sensation, I am conscious of a present sensation, and I believe that the former did, and that the latter does, belong to one and the same sentient being; and this belief is no deduction from observation, though memory is essential to its existence; but is the result of an instinctive and universal law of our nature. When Des Cartes reasoned, *cogito, ergo sum*, he assumed, in the pronoun *I*, the very point, which he attempted to prove. And when we say, I remember this or that action of mine, we assume our own identity; and the conviction of this identity is instantaneous and immediate.

We deny, then, the position of the Materialist, when he affirms, that consciousness is limited to what we perceive, and what we do; and on the contrary assert, that

we are conscious, that we are each, one self-same, indivisible being. This consciousness of unity is as little reconcileable with the hypothesis, that the brain is the thinking substance, as the feeling of personal identity*.

* Mr. Lawrence would throw a doubt on the validity of this argument, by telling us, that "this assumed unity of the sentient principle becomes doubtful, when we see other animals possessed of nervous systems, which, after being cut in two, form again two perfect animals."

In answer to this objection, we would remark, that the unity of the sentient principle is to be distinguished from the consciousness of that unity. Until it can be shewn, that the insects, to which the author refers, have a consciousness, that they are each one individual being, their case bears no analogy to ours; nor can we reason conclusively from the one to the other. But let us waive this distinction. Mr. Lawrence assumes, that it is essential to the truth of the immaterial hypothesis, that every insect, capable of being divided, and forming two distinct insects, should have an immaterial principle. We deny this necessity, and demand some proof of the author's assumption. We cannot assent to a position, whether directly or indirectly affirmed, which is wholly gratuitous. We contend, that the phenomena of the human mind lead us to conclude the existence of an immaterial principle in man; how far it extends, if it does extend below him, we know not; but our ignorance here is surely no argument for rejecting, what appears to be a fact, established by clear and cogent evidence. With all the aids which human vision has received, we cannot draw the precise line, which separates organic from inorganic substance; but we do not therefore dispute the existence of organization. Mr. Lawrence will not deny, that man possesses a power of volition. In tracing this power downward

The brain consists of an indefinite number of particles, with which the feeling of unity seems wholly incompatible.

from the human species, through all the different grades of organized being, can Mr. Lawrence tell us, where the power of volition stops? Are there not some instances, which would almost tempt us to think, that even certain plants possess this faculty*. But, though we cannot ascertain how far it extends, do we therefore doubt, that we are gifted with a voluntary power? An immaterial principle, then, may in like manner, belong to man, though we are incapable of discovering whether it be peculiar to him, or to what other classes of animated beings, inferior to him, it may be communicated. The fact, to which Mr. Lawrence refers, may avail to disprove an immaterial principle as existing in insects; but no farther can it go; it cannot prove more, nor is even this conclusion certain. We know too little of the philosophy of sensation in the insect tribe, and too little of the mode, in which any thing but matter exists and acts, to be able to pronounce a decided judgment. For aught we can tell, an immaterial principle may not exist in insects; or it may exist in each, after division. "Can an immaterial principle be divided?" Mr. Lawrence triumphantly asks. We answer in the negative. Its division is impossible, for it is not material; nor is its division necessary to the validity of our argument, unless Mr. Lawrence can shew, that the insect, which was before division one conscious being, becomes, after division, two conscious beings.

In regard to the objection, as referring merely to the unity of the sentient principle, we perceive no improbability in the supposition, that the principle may remain in the organ of sensation after division; and that the part am-

* See Vol. I. p. 512.

The Materialist may urge, that, though the particles of which the brain is composed, are numerous, they still constitute but one system.

In answer we would observe, that this is a unity merely in name, and is in fact as much a plurality, as when we speak of an army, or of one thousand, or of one million. And, as we have reason to believe, that no two atoms are in actual contact, it is just as difficult to reconcile this separate existence of the particles, with the consciousness of personal unity, as if they were disjoined at immeasurable distances. No one can justly consider the solar system, consisting of four

putated, though possessing irritability and even life, may cease to have sensation, until the same power, which gave the insect existence, shall form a new organ, accompanied with a new sentient principle.

"The earth worm," says an intelligent philosopher, "uniting in itself both sexes, may possibly consist of two animated systems . . . . . and if a worm be found to have two seats of sensation, analogous to the brain in higher animals, and if it be found, that life continues only in such sections, as retain at least one seat of sensation, the sentient principle in the worm may be as simple and indivisible, as in any animal whatever."* This he offers, as a conjectural explanation of the difficulty.

* Encyc. Brit.—Art. Metaphysics.

or five hundred bodies, in any other sense, than as only nominally one. And, if we consider them all subject to any one affection, each and every particle is individually subject to that affection. When we say, "I hope," "I fear," "I rejoice," is every particle in the brain the subject of these emotions? Then every particle can hope and fear: will this absurdity be maintained? Or does the brain, as a whole, hope, fear, and rejoice? This seems as repugnant to reason, as to suppose, that the planets and comets, as a system, might have an affection, in which each of them did not participate. This leads us to consider another argument, in favour of the doctrine of Immaterialism, which merits particular attention.

3dly, "That the power of the whole is the power of all the parts", taken as a general abstract proposition, is a self-evident truth. It cannot be denied, without affirming the absurdity, that the whole is not equal to all the parts. The Immaterialist then contends, that to assert, that a material system can be invested with a power, which is not the power of all the parts, involves this palpable absurdity. Dr. Clarke indeed has yen-

tured to affirm, that it exceeds the power of Omnipotence to render matter capable of consciousness and perception.

Are we then placed in this predicament, that we must either maintain a metaphysical contradiction, or deny, that the Deity can impart to matter a cogitative faculty, and thus question His Omnipotence? Before we can assent to the latter alternative, so repulsive to our natural apprehensions of an Eternal and Infinite Being, we should require indubitable evidence, that the hypothesis of materialism necessarily involves this metaphysical contradiction; and that the maxim does not admit an explanation, reconcileable with the doctrine, advocated by the Materialist. Several philosophers indeed, who have concurred with Dr. Clarke, in charging the doctrine of materialism with this gross contradiction, have yet shrunk from the consequences, which *he* is bold enough to assert. Locke perceived no contradiction in the hypothesis of the Materialist, and he recoiled from the thought of prescribing a limit to Almighty power, in a question of fact, not regarding it as a metaphysical question of abstract relation. We view the subject with a similar feeling, and startle at the notion of

limiting the energies of Omnipotence, unless where clear and palpable contrarieties are asserted. While we disclaim every intention to extenuate what may be considered to be the absurdities of the Materialist, as we are not inclined to exaggerate his errors, we feel an invincible repugnance to every dogma, which would limit the Divine power, by our narrow apprehensions of physical possibility. Let us attend to the Materialist's attempt to relieve his hypothesis from a metaphysical contradiction.

He asks, whether it be not possible, that the whole, or all the parts, may collectively have a power, which does not belong to any of the parts separately in any degree; and whether the power of the whole may not be considered, as the power of all the parts, inasmuch as all the constituent parts are necessary to the effect. He does not believe, that the power of thinking is the aggregate of the separate cogitative powers of the parts, but that it is a power united to the whole; and, as it cannot pertain to a part, is therefore the power of all the parts. But this, says Dr. Clarke, would be still a metaphysical contradiction, as implying a power, or an effect, without a cause. We question

the truth of this observation. Is there no cause, because the power does not essentially belong to the parts separately, or to the whole, but is communicated by the Author of all power? If the Deity were to impart vitality to an atom of inert matter, would it be a power without a substance, or an uncaused effect? Are the properties of attraction, repulsion, vegetation, and assimilation, as communicated to matter, effects without a cause?

But, observes the same philosopher, it would still be a metaphysical contradiction, since it would imply a universal, without particulars. Might not the Materialist answer, that this argument would be pertinent, only on the supposition, that he denied, that the whole brain consists of all its parts? Might he not contend, that Dr. Clarke erred, in representing his hypothesis, as implying, that the power of consciousness, or that of perception, is "a universal", to the notion of which particulars are essential? Denying universality in the faculty, he may deny, that it is constituted of particulars; perceiving, he may allege at the same time, no absurdity in believing, that it is within the compass of Omnipotence to invest a system with a power, which belongs to none of the parts, though

all are essential to the existence of that power. And, if all the parts, or the whole, be necessary to the existence of that power, he may contend, that his hypothesis does not violate the abstract truth, the power being that of the whole, or of all the parts. If this explanation be admitted as satisfactory, the charge of a metaphysical contradiction is obviated. While we leave the objection and the answer to the judgment of the reader, we feel it our duty to remark, that we should rather be disposed to acknowledge the validity of the Materialist's defence, than presume to doubt the Omnipotence of Deity.

Waiving then the metaphysical contradiction, the next question, that presents itself, is a question of fact, in which we find less difficulty in arriving at a clear and satisfactory conclusion. Does the constitution of nature present us with a single example, in which the power of the whole is not the aggregate of the several powers of the constituent parts? We confidently affirm, that not one instance can be found either in the works of nature, or the productions of art. The Materialist, fully aware that, unless some such examples can be adduced, Dr. Clarke's objection must, agreeably with his own principles of reasoning, be fatal to his hypothesis,

endeavours to shew, that the doctrine, which he maintains, is exemplified by facts. If it shall be found, that he fails in this attempt, he must, if he be consistent with himself, renounce his hypothesis.

It is a truth, confirmed by experience, whatever opinion may be formed of its metaphysical certainty, that the power, belonging to any system, or substance, is the aggregate of the powers belonging to the several parts, of which the system or substance is constituted; or, as the proposition has been stated by Clarke, every power, or quality, which can strictly be said to inhere in any substance, is nothing but the sum of so many powers or qualities of the same kind, with some, or all, of those, which inhere in the component parts. The motive power of a muscle is the aggregate power of all the parts, each part possessing and exerting a portion of that power; so also of every tendon. The power of the heart, the power of the lungs, the power of the liver, the power of the absorbents, in like manner, is nothing but the power of all the component parts in these several organs, each part having a portion of that power. If the brain, then, be a thinking substance, and have a cogitative power, that power, like every other systematic power, with which we

are acquainted, must, in the very nature of things, as far as we can judge, be the aggregate of the powers, belonging to its component parts. It follows, that each part possesses a certain portion of this cogitative power, a certain portion of consciousness, of perception, of reason; but this is impossible; for, though these powers admit degrees, they are indivisible faculties; they cannot therefore be divided among the constituent parts. If each part possessed consciousness, perception, and reason, in any degree, there would be as many thinking beings, as there are parts; but man is only one thinking being.

If the cogitative power belongs not to the parts individually, but to the whole as a system, then the power of the whole is not the power of all the parts,—a position, which, whatever may be its metaphysical character, is unquestionably opposed by universal experience. We might as rationally believe, that a gravitating mass might be composed of ungravitating particles; or that a muscle might have vital power, while not a particle of it possessed vitality.

The Materialist professes to find no difficulty here; and adduces examples to prove,

that a system may have a power, or a property, which belongs not to any of its component parts. These examples, however, we shall find generally irrelevant, and universally incapable of supporting his hypothesis.

It is urged by the Materialist, that a sphere possesses a property, which belongs to none of the parts. This is admitted; but the argument remains entire. The exterior parts of a sphere, on which the property of volubility depends, have all portions of sphericity; and the interior parts, considered as a number of concentric shells, have the same. Can consciousness be divided, as a circle is divisible into quadrants, sextants, or other arches? Does a portion of a perception, of a passion, of a hope, or of a fear, belong to each part of the brain? If consciousness, perception, or memory may result from a conglomeration of atoms unconscious, impercipient, and unreminiscent, a circle may be composed of squares, or right lines.

A clock, it is said, has a power, which belongs to none of the parts, nor is of the same kind with the power of any of the parts. We would ask Mr. Collins, who offers this example in reply to our objection, what is the power, to which he here refers? If he means

the power of indicating the hour of the day, we deny the applicability of the term power, in this sense, to the subject in question. By power he understands, what is capable of producing or suffering change*. What power then has the clock as a system? What change does it effect? The sun's altitude, like the position of the hands on the dial plate, will tell us the hour of the day; but we should pervert the use of terms, if we said, that the sun has the power of effecting this. And, if any power of the clock were admitted, we should affirm, in contradiction to the assertion of Collins, that it is precisely of the same kind with the power of the parts, and the result of their individual powers. The clock is a piece of machinery for producing an equable motion on a surface, divided into twelve equal parts. Something is effected by the whole, which none of the single parts is capable of producing. But the motion of the hands is of the same kind with, and the result of, all the other motions. Is the feel-

* To speak of "passive power," or "the power of suffering change," is to pervert the meaning of words, and to introduce confusion of ideas. Power is not passive, but active. The incongruous terms were, we believe, introduced by Mr. Locke.

ing of consciousness, or the power of perception, the result of all the other feelings of consciousness, or of all the other perceptions?

The same, or a similar answer may be returned, when it is urged, that the eye possesses a power, which belongs to none of the parts. It is equally irrelevant and inconclusive to state, that the combination of two fluids produces a *tertium quid*, possessing properties belonging to neither. Is not the power of the whole compound still nothing more, than the power of all the parts? In order to render this example pertinent and applicable, it should be shewn, that the compound possesses a power, which is not made up of the powers of the parts, in their new modification. The liver secretes, and a muscle contracts, but each is divisible; and the power of the whole is the power of the parts, each part having a portion of that power, which is either greater or less, according to the power of the parts collectively.

It has been said, that the quality or property of each part singly, or the collective properties of the majority of the parts in any system, may not be adequate to the effect, which yet may be produced by the united agency of all. Thus, it is argued, every

particle in a scale has a tendency downward, but singly may be incapable of depressing the scale; while the united tendencies make it preponderate. A ray of light may be insufficient to inflame; but inflammation may be produced by concentrated rays. But has not each particle a portion of gravity, each ray a portion of caloric; and are not the effects the result of the united powers respectively? Has each atom of the brain a portion of consciousness? Is the feeling of identity divisible?

To nearly the same purpose, and with equal fallacy, does Mr. Collins urge, that there may be a power in the particles of the brain "to contribute to the act of thinking, when they are united, though, while disunited, they have no more of consciousness than any being, which produces sweetness in us, when under a particular form, has a power to produce sweetness in us, when its parts are disunited and separated." This hypothesis, we apprehend, will not bear examination. How can particles of matter contribute what they have not? How long will the Materialist be inconsistent with himself? Is not this an impossibility, which constitutes one of his leading arguments?

If they contribute to thinking, as every particle in a rose (to adopt the author's illustration) contributes to its effect, these particles must have each a portion of thinking. Will this be maintained? If not, how is it possible for them to contribute what they do not possess?

Mr. Collins further argues, and has been followed by several physiologists, that, though all matter is essentially the same, and each particle in the same circumstances has the same power, yet in different circumstances it has a different power; and, as each particle exerts a power peculiar to its circumstances, the power of the system will not be the sum of the powers of the same kind, as Dr. Clarke maintains, but the aggregate of powers of a different kind. He adds, by way of illustration, that "some parts of matter become parts of dung, earth, grass, corn, sheep, horses, men, &c."

It is admitted, that different particles of matter, in different circumstances, acquire different properties; but this fact neither subserves the hypothesis of the Materialist, nor invalidates the reasoning of his opponent. The argument of the Immaterialist is egregiously misconceived, when it is understood

to imply, that the associated qualities shall be all of the same kind, one with another; his assertion is, that the resulting quality or power shall be of the same kind with, or partake of, the several qualities or powers, which belong to the component parts, not in a state of disunion, but of composition. Two fluids, when mixed, may produce a compound, possessing a property, which did not belong to either of the fluids singly. But still the properties of the compound are the result of the properties of the particles, as modified by the commixture. Every particle in the human brain may have been previously in an inert state; it may have antecedently formed part of a vegetable, or part of another animal substance; but when the particles constitute a brain, the power of the system must be the aggregate power of the parts; and, where no part is percipient, the whole cannot be percipient. It matters not, what may have been the qualities or properties of the atoms before they were united, or organised: the power belonging to the organ must be the result of the aggregate powers of its constituent parts.

Hobbes, feeling this argument against Materialism to be insuperable, cites a fanciful

hypothesis of some ancient philosophers, to which however, though he represents it as in his opinion not to be refuted, he was prudent enough not to express his assent*. They supposed, that all bodies are endowed with sense, that the essence of sensation consists in reaction, and that nothing is wanting in these bodies to sensation, but memory to retain the impressions made upon their senses. If the argument of the Immaterialist is not to be shaken, and the contradiction involved in that of his opponent not to be removed, until we can believe, that a stone sees, hears, and smells, but does not remember its sensations, the argument and the contradiction, we may venture to predict, without the spirit of prophecy, will remain for ever, as they now are.

The argument then of the Immaterialist seems conclusive. It proceeds thus. Consciousness is a simple feeling, and perception a simple act of the mind. If the brain be conscious and percipient, every atom of the brain must have a portion of consciousness and perceptivity; but this is impossible, for consciousness and perception are indivi-

* Phys. Cap. 25, Sect. 5.

sible; or each particle of the brain must be conscious, on which supposition, there must be as many conscious beings as atoms; but this is contrary to fact; or no part of the brain is conscious or perceptive; and then it follows, that the power of the whole is not the power of all the parts, which is a physical contradiction.

SECTION II.

Arguments for Immaterialism continued.

4THLY, "It is argued, in favour of Immaterialism, that it is by its qualities and properties, and these only, that every substance is known to us. And as, wherever we find a diversity of qualities, we uniformly refer them to different substances; so, where the qualities or powers are totally dissimilar, having no common point of resemblance, we refer them to substances, which are wholly unlike. The qualities and properties of matter are represented by some philosophers to be magnitude, figure, and motion; and by others to be extension, attraction, and repulsion. The known and acknowledged

properties and powers of the mind are sensation, perception, consciousness, reflection, memory, judgment and reason: while the emotions of the soul are joy, grief, hope, fear, and so forth. Now, as the properties and qualities of matter, in all their possible varieties and combinations, as far as we can perceive them, can produce nothing but figure, magnitude, or motion; and as these bear no resemblance or analogy whatever, either in themselves, or in their effects, to the qualities and powers of consciousness, perception, and volition, they cannot, we maintain, be rationally supposed to belong to similar substances. Qualities and operations, known by sense, we refer to matter; properties and operations, not perceptible by sense, and known only by consciousness, or reflection, we refer to a substance not material. Matter or body may attract and repel—may absorb, secrete, and expand; but can it turn upon itself, and make its own nature, or its own powers, the objects of its examination. Can it judge, can it reason, can it hope, can it fear? If the former properties belong to matter, the latter, which are totally dissimilar, must be the powers and properties of something, which is not material. An idea, a

sensation, an emotion, a volition, are not divisible; they must therefore inhere in a substance, which is not divisible.

If the Materialist should abandon the notion, that ideas are extended, and capable of division, but maintain, that, like attraction and repulsion, all our perceptions, and ideas, all our recollections, passions, and emotions, are mere affections of matter, he must be prepared to assert the consequences, which this hypothesis involves. Will it then be affirmed, that the brain feels pleasure, or pain? Is it not rather by reason of certain nervous affections, extended to the brain, that the sentient subject feels these sensations? Can the brain be benevolent? Can it be angry? Can it be sorrowful? Can it hope or fear? It may undergo certain changes by the influence of these passions, but it is not the being, that is pleased, or offended, that is dejected, or rejoices,—that fears, or hopes, that wills, or reasons.

The Immaterialist, we are aware, contends, that when we conclude, that sensation, perception, memory, and reason, with passions, and emotions, cannot belong to matter, because they are different from attraction and repulsion,—from figure, magnitude, and mo-

tion, we draw an inference, which the actual difference does not justify. Mr. Lawrence affirms, that the "vital processes of muscular contraction, secretion, and nutrition, &c., are as different from any affection of inorganic substance, as reasoning, or thought;" and it is maintained, that, if we refer the vital processes, which are as different from attraction and repulsion, as thinking is from these processes, to the same subject *matter*, there is no reason, why, notwithstanding its dissimilarity to the vital powers, thinking also should not belong to it.

It must appear, we presume, to every intelligent reader, a bold affirmation for Mr. Lawrence to advance, that the contraction of a muscle is as different from magnetic attraction, as the demonstration of a mathematical theorem, or the passions of joy and sorrow. A proposition so paradoxical might be safely left to be its own refutation; and as it is not supported by a single argument, we should be justified in dismissing it with a simple denial. But, as mere assertions and negations on either side ought to avail nothing, we shall briefly assign our reasons for rejecting it as false.

In all physical agency, as attraction, re-

pulsion, combination, absorption, and secretion, motion is essentially included. It is inseparable from every mechanical, chemical, and vital process. Will the Materialist affirm, as a fact, equally indisputable, that the consciousness of self-identity, the consciousness of personal unity, judging, remembering, and reasoning, are either motion, or the results of motion? Collins, though he suggested the hypothesis, did not venture to assert it. In the various processes of inorganic and organic matter, the law of gravity is found to act generally, if not universally; and is discoverable both in the cause and in the effect. Does gravity enter, either directly or indirectly, into the investigation of a metaphysical truth? The notion is absurd. Until the Materialist, then, shall have proved, that our intellectual processes are either motion, or the results of motion, by evidence as conclusive, as that, which shews, that motion is essential to every organic and inorganic agency, the affirmation of Mr. Lawrence must, we apprehend, be pronounced gratuitous, if not false.

In connection with this observation, we would remark, that all physical processes terminate in modifications of matter. Can

the Materialist shew, that our conviction of a mathematical truth, is a mere modification of matter? That the persuasion of its certainty is the persuasion of the brain? Can he shew, that our belief, that the areas of circles are as the squares of their diameters, has either length, breadth, or thickness? Or that our belief, that whatever had a beginning must have had a cause, has any relation to figure, magnitude, or motion? Can he prove, that all our intellectual, like mechanical and vital, processes, issue in nothing but material affections? Any paradox may be asserted; but something, more satisfactory than simple affirmation, is required, before a rational mind will yield its assent.

Again.—For every mechanical, chemical, and vital operation, we have ocular evidence. In whatever degree attraction and repulsion, as affections of inorganic matter, may differ from the processes of absorption, assimilation, and nutrition, they all agree in this respect, that their immediate causes and effects are objects of sense. Will it be maintained, that intellectual agency, and mental processes, in this particular resemble these, and are also objects of sense? Are the conclusions of the mathematician, the deductions

of the philosopher, the abstractions of the metaphysician, the intellectual treasures of the historian, or the imaginations of the poet, visible or tangible? This, in our apprehension, constitutes alone a distinction so striking, that, if there were no other, we should be justified in denying the author's assertion.

When the physiologist, then, contends, that there is no greater difference between vital and intellectual properties, than exists between the former, and attraction or repulsion, we, in opposition to this, affirm, that there does exist a similarity between all organic and inorganic processes, each, notwithstanding its peculiarities, being subject to one common law, and all being objects of sense; but none whatever between the former and any intellectual operation and affection. We perceive not the most distant resemblance between the motion of a muscle, and the emotion of hope, between the evolution of an abstract truth, and the conversion of inorganic into organic matter. The difference, as a matter of fact, we confidently leave to the judgment of every intelligent mind, accustomed to metaphysical enquiries, and to a comparison of the transmutations of matter with the modifications of human thought.

The Materialist urges, that, when we assume matter to have only mechanical, chemical, and vital properties, or define it as possessing no other susceptibilities, than what are resolvable into figure, magnitude, and motion, we beg the question, and establish an arbitrary definition, in order to suit a favourite hypothesis.

We answer, that it is by sense, and this only, that we can become acquainted with the qualities and properties of material substance. If there be any other mode of learning its phenomena, we shall feel ourselves indebted to the Materialist, if he will indulgently communicate it. Our definition, then, so far from being arbitrary, includes every power and every affection, which our senses inform us, that matter possesses. Our definition rests on facts; it allows to matter mechanical, chemical, and vital properties; and, though not proceeding beyond facts, it omits no quality or power, which the direct evidence of experience attests. But the Materialist will not confine himself to facts; he resorts to possibilities; and would persuade us to receive as a fact, a mere inference of his own, against the legitimacy of which we protest, until he can shew that, because an

instrument is necessary to an operation, nothing beyond the instrument is, or can be, required. Let him prove that, because the organ of sight is necessary to vision, it is therefore the percipient being; and we may then be inclined to admit his inference, that the brain is not merely the organ of thought, but the thinking substance. But we contend, that he neither has, nor can have any direct evidence, that matter thinks, as that a muscle contracts. It is not the Immaterialist, who errs, by an unwarrantable limitation of the properties of matter, but the Materialist, who would extend them beyond the testimony of sense, by which only we are capable of ascertaining what they are.

But of all the attempts, which have been made by the Materialist to weaken the force of this argument, and to remove the insuperable difficulties opposed to his hypothesis, there is none, which has been more confidently obtruded on our attention, and none, as we conceive, less rational, than that, which would resolve the phenomena of mind into mere modes of motion. The absurdity of this hypothesis was sufficiently exposed by Dr. Clarke, in his correspondence with

Collins; and the latter, though he endeavoured, but very unsuccessfully, to prove the invalidity of Clarke's objections, did not venture to assert the hypothesis, which he had, notwithstanding, affirmed to be reconcileable to reason. Several succeeding writers, however, have not scrupled to maintain this paradoxical opinion, with confidence and pertinacity; resolving all thought into modes of motion, and denying the existence of any immaterial principle. The arguments, which they have urged, are merely a repetition of the reasoning and illustrations adopted by Collins, which we hesitate not to pronounce inconsistent, inapplicable, and nugatory.

He acknowledges, that we have an abstract idea of motion, comprehending under it "all modes of motion, that ever *did or can exist;*" but he denies, "that we have an idea of all the really existing, much less, of *all possible*, modes of motion." * Now, if the expression *all possible modes of motion* be equivalent to *all modes of motion, that ever did or can exist*, it is surely a flat contradiction to maintain, that we have,

and yet have not, an idea of all possible modes of motion. Unless Mr. Collins can establish a distinction, where there is no difference, his concession and his negation are mutually repugnant. But let us dismiss this inconsistency; his argument is powerless, and amounts to nothing. We have an idea, he says, of all the simple modes of motion; but of the very complex modes, as in vegetation, and animal changes, we have not a distinct conception. Be it granted, that there may be thousands of modes of motion, of which we have no conception, we ask, and we ask emphatically, what can all these inconceivable varieties of motion be, but modes of motion? No quality or property, though modified *ad infinitum*, can ever be any thing else, than that quality or property; and motion, though diversified into ten thousand different varieties, must be motion still, and nothing else. Can the sweetness of a substance be modified into acidity, or any other sapid quality, and yet continue to be sweetness?

Thinking, he observes, has "the genus of motion by arising from motion, by being varied by motion, and by its producing other motions distinct from itself; and has likewise succession and parts, and withal, in-

numerable modifications. Wherefore since no particular idea of human consciousness can be produced beyond the genus of motion, and that we can have no particular idea of the more complex modes of motion, that exist, it is impossible for him (Dr. Clarke) to prove or know, that one is not the other. For, till he has a further idea of the nature of human thinking, than what I have described, and a particular distinct idea of that complex mode of motion, that exists in our animal spirits, he can no more know, that the one is not the other, than he can know, whether two things agree or differ from one another, that he has no idea of at all."

This reasoning is unworthy of Collins; it is irreconcileable with that sagacity, by which he is generally distinguished. Clarke has amply exposed its fallacy, by applying it to two cases, in which its absurdity is evident. "If I should plead", says he, "in favour of motion's being a mode of figure (as you do for thinking's being a mode of motion) that though we have indeed ideas of the more simple modes of figure, yet of very complex ones we have no distinct conception in our minds; and that, therefore, we are sure indeed, that a triangle or a square is not a

motion, yet we can no more prove or know, that motion is not one of the more complex modes of figure, than we can know whether two things agree or differ from one another, that we have no idea of at all;—if I should argue thus," says Clarke, "I know well, what mathematicians would argue concerning me, and I can guess, what answer I should deserve, if I should tell the world further, that it is not possible for us to say, that colour does not consist in a peculiar mixture of ten thousand various sounds, till we have a particular distinct idea of the result of the mixture of those ten thousand sounds. I may call scarlet colour, if I please, a very complex mode of sound; and who shall confute me, by producing the particular distinct idea of the result of a peculiar mixture of ten thousand sounds?"

Though no other exposure of this extravagant hypothesis can be deemed necessary, we would intreat the indulgence of the reader, while we submit to his attention one or two additional observations.

If thought arises from motion, we would ask the Materialist, how it happens that, out of the infinite number, and the vast variety of motions, in the physical world, motions

mechanical, chemical, and electrical, no thought is ever produced. Is this fact reconcileable with his hypothesis? If not conclusive, it certainly furnishes a strong presumption against the Materialist, until he can shew, that atoms of matter, though nowhere else capable by motion of producing thought, can, in the brain, produce thought. The fact being universally, as far as we can perceive, repugnant to his hypothesis, it is incumbent on him to prove the exception.

Collins assumes, that no particular idea of human consciousness can be produced beyond the genus of motion. On this position his conclusion rests. It is somewhat difficult to understand, what the author means, by *producing a particular idea of consciousness.* An adversary is sure to elude our grasp, when it is impossible to apprehend him. If he means, that motion is necessary to the sensation of external objects, it is true; but we deny, that motion and sensation are therefore one and the same thing Light is necessary to the perception of colour; but light is not, therefore, either colour or perception. If he means, that we have no idea of consciousness, which does not include the idea of motion, we deny the assertion, and affirm,

that our consciousness of judging, doubting, reasoning, and remembering, does not involve any idea of motion, nor can, without absurdity, be considered to be a genus, or mode, of motion. The grounds, on which he asserts, that thinking has the genus of motion, are these; that it arises from motion, is varied by motion, produces other motions, and has succession and parts. What judgment the reader may form of the validity of these arguments, we do not presume to conjecture. We shall only observe, that in our apprehension, it needs excite no surprise, that Clarke dismissed them, as unworthy of any serious reply.

"Thinking arises from motion," *ergo*, it has the genus of motion. This is a singular inference. Pain arises from gangrene, the sensation of heat from hot iron, and resentment from a sense of injury; *ergo*, pain has the genus of gangrene, the sensation of heat has the genus of hot iron, and the feeling of resentment has the genus of injury.—These are strange conclusions, but quite legitimate, if that of Mr. Collins be correct. But "thinking", says the author, "is varied by motion;" therefore it has the genus of motion. Our feelings are varied by sensible objects; therefore feeling has the genus of external objects.

Is this a rational conclusion? Thinking produces motion, *ergo*, thinking has the genus of motion. This is to affirm that the effect must have the genus of its cause, *ergo*, a wound by a sword must have the genus of a sword. It would be a trespass on the patience of the reader to prosecute the subject further.

It has been observed, that how numerous soever may be the modes of motion, they can be nothing else than motion. But, if the hypothesis of Collins be true, motion exists as a *genus*, and cogitative motion, as a species. This is denied by Clarke, who maintains, that thinking is a more generic and comprehensive power than motion. "There are", says he, "as many ideas of motion, as there are modes of motion, and as many ideas of figure as there are figures, and as many ideas of other things as there are other things in the world, that can be thought upon *. . . . . Now if thinking is a power more various, more extensive, more general than motion, it is manifest, it cannot be a mode or species of motion, as roundness is a mode or species of figure." This invincible objection of Clarke,

* Clarke's Third Defence.

his opponent vainly endeavours to overturn. In the attempt he involves himself in palpable inconsistency. Nothing can be more evident, than that the genus includes all the species; whereas the species cannot include the genus, though it must comprehend more ideas, than are implied in the genus. It would be as absurd to say, that the term *man* includes all animals, as that *cogitative motion*, as a species of motion, includes all motions. It seems self-evident, that thinking is a more extensive power, than that of motion; it cannot therefore be a species of motion, without involving the absurdity, that the less includes the greater number.

To believe, that perception is motion, seems as ridiculous as to believe, that sound is smell. It would require no common evidence to prove, that, by the motions of the cerebral congeries of atoms, some upwards, some downwards, some backwards, some forwards, some rectilinear, some curvilinear, some swift, some slow—by some or all of these, the brain demonstrates a proposition in Euclid, discusses a metaphysical question, or evolves by analysis a mathematical truth.

But this is not all. There is still, we

apprehend, another insuperable difficulty. Unless it be absurdly maintained, that motion itself is thought, it is evident, that either the motion precedes the thought, or that the thought precedes the motion. If the former alternative be adopted, we desire to know, by what is the motion so regulated, as to produce the thought. Certain motions must be associated with certain perceptions, certain judgments, and certain feelings; and as no particle of matter has sense to govern its own motions, by what are they so directed, as to produce regular trains of thinking? If, on the contrary, the thought precedes the motion, it is evident, that the latter cannot be its cause. Among the numerous paradoxes and absurdities, which have been gravely proposed, and irrationally embraced, we know none more ridiculous and extravagant than the hypothesis, that thought is nothing but one of the modes of motion—that the discovery of a scientific truth, and the motion of a vane on a church steeple, are facts of one and the same genus. This paradoxical dogma is, indeed, the necessary consequence of the hypothesis of those Materialists, who maintain that all the properties of matter ultimately resolve themselves into

attraction and repulsion; for, if this dogma be true, all thought must be a species of these properties, or t is nothing.

Every attempt, which the Materialist has made to overturn the arguments of his opponents, and to reconcile his hypothesis with the phenomena of mind, has proved unsatisfactory and fruitless. Nothing indeed can more clearly manifest the insuperable difficulties, with which he feels himself embarrassed, than his strained and unphilosophical endeavours to explain the powers and susceptibilities of the mind, by referring them to physical agency. He proposes extravagancies to our belief, which, were it not that our habitual associations, and the structure of all languages, give them an air of credibility, would be instantly pronounced absurd. "Consciousness", says Collins, "of having done an action, is an idea, imprinted on the brain, by recollecting, or bringing into view our ideas, before they are quite worn out, which idea continues in me, not only the memory of the action itself, but that *I* did it." Is there any question, however difficult, which might not be resolved, if a solution like this should be received, as philosophical, or satisfactory? His expla-

nation amounts to nothing, but a naked and vague assertion; and the assertion itself appears to be superlatively ridiculous. Has he told us, how it is possible for recollection to imprint an idea on the brain? Has he offered a single illustration of its possibility? Has he told us, how the impress on his brain is accompanied with the conviction, that the idea is his, and that the action was his? We are aware, that the philosopher is not required to name the secret power, by which any phenomenon is produced. But we are warranted to demand sufficient evidence of the fact, and likewise of its proximate cause. Has the author offered a single argument, which can give his hypothesis even the semblance of probability? Has he specified a single fact to prove, that an idea is *imprinted* by recollection, in the physical, and, according to the Materialist, the only admissible, sense of the term? Who ever saw this impression made? Who ever discovered a vestige of its existence? Will the Materialist explain to us, by what, or by whom, an idea, or image, of a smell, or a taste, is imprinted on the brain?

It is truly unfortunate for the interests of metaphysical science, that we are compelled

to apply the language of matter to the qualities of the mind. This has a necessary tendency to establish in our conceptions a fancied analogy between the two subjects, inclining us to reason of the one, as if it resembled the other. Hence we hear without surprise, and without even a desire to investigate the possibility of the fact, that impressions are made on the cerebral substances, that in time "they are worn out," and forgotten; that the deeper they are, the longer they last, and the more superficial, the sooner they disappear. All this we hear, without any sentiment of doubt, or any feeling of wonder. But, before we assent to so extraordinary a hypothesis, would it not be necessary to ascertain, how far such impressions are possible, and by what is the brain imprinted? Would it not be right to have some conception at least, how a hope, or a fear could be stamped on a soft, marrowy, substance?* Though the very notion of such an imprint be superlatively extravagant, if

* "An imprimi quasi ceram animum putamus, et memoriam esse signatarum rerum in mente vestigia? Quæ possunt verborum, quæ rerum ipsarum esse vestigia? Quæ porro tam immensa magnitudo, quæ illa tam multa possit effingere."—*Cic. Tusc. Quæst.* lib. i.

not impossible and absurd, yet the Materialist assumes these impressions, not in a figurative, but in a literal, sense, assigning to them surface, depth, and durability, with as great ease, and as much confidence, as if it were a matter of fact, and of unquestionable certainty. Such are the absurdities, and paradoxes, which the Materialist offers to our assent, and which from the analogy, which common phraseology has a necessary tendency to establish, between mind and matter, are too apt to elude our detection, and even to recommend themselves to our belief, by their congruity with our physical and most familiar conceptions.

But this is not all. Let the impressions be conceded. We ask how it is reconcileable with the known properties of matter, as ascertained by sense, our only source of information respecting them, to suppose, that a pulpy mass shall be capable of modifying and combining these images, in an indefinite variety, forming conceptions, which never were imprinted, and to which nothing, actually existing, bears any resemblance. It seems a monstrous hypothesis, against which, reason, and imagination itself, equally revolt, that this soft, pulpy mass can examine,

arrange, classify, abstract, compound, and new model its ideas, constituting, now the historian, now the philosopher, now the poet, now the metaphysician. A doctrine so repugnant to all our notions of matter and its powers, whether in an organic, or inorganic state, it would require resistless evidence to prove. There seems something, which strikes the mind as utterly incredible in the supposition, that a *congeries* of medullary particles like the brain, confined within the narrow limits of its seat, shall, by any physical power, transport us in imagination into the regions of space, carry us back to distant ages, and forward through the immeasurable periods of eternity, and this, too, with a rapidity, by which light itself is left behind. If any matter be capable of this, it is not the matter, with which we are acquainted.

Again: will the presumed impressions on the brain account for the phenomena, on the hypothesis of the Materialist? We know, that, in sensation, the organs are affected by the presence of external objects, and that these affections are communicated to the brain. But it frequently happens, that the mind is unconscious of them. The clock strikes beside me, and I do not hear it; I

pass a friend in the street, and stare him in the face, but do not see him. Objects are, in like manner, presented to the other senses, and we do not perceive them. Whence is this? Is it because the brain is otherwise occupied, and cannot attend to the impressions which it receives? It matters not to the conclusion, which we are inclined to draw from these facts, whether we suppose, that perception has taken place, and is forgotten; or that there has been no perception of the objects. Does it not naturally lead to this conclusion, that, while the brain receives the impression (we shall use the term) there is an ulterior and superior principle, on whose energy and attention this impression depends for its effect?

From a review of the preceding arguments, it would appear, that, while the doctrine of immaterialism involves some difficulties, and these chiefly arising from our inability to imagine a substance, which is not perceptible to sense, and to comprehend the mode of its existence, and its agency, the contrary hypothesis is not only opposed by insuperable objections, but is chargeable, if not with a metaphysical, with what the Materialist himself would pronounce to be, a physical contra-

diction. And how plausible soever the arguments of the Materialist may appear, and whatever difficulties may accompany the hypothesis of his opponent, it must be acknowledged, that it seems impossible either to reconcile the consciousness of personal identity with the unceasing change of the substance, in which that consciousness resides; or to believe the feeling of personal unity and indivisibility to be the property of an organ composed of parts, and divisible into atoms; or to assent to the hypothesis of impressions on a substance, on which no such impression was ever discovered, and which, if made, it must be, from its perpetual changes, incapable of retaining. Moreover though the physiologist may shew that the power of thinking depends on the brain, as the faculty of seeing depends on the eye, he mistakes egregiously, if he supposes, that all his anatomical science can conduct him one single step beyond this fact, or that the question can be decided by the exhibitions on the dissecting table of a lecture room. And, while the organ must necessarily be distinct from the agent, and the destruction of the one does not necessarily involve the annihilation of the other, though it may sus-

pend its agency, it is vain for the Materialist to contend, that the agent as a substance ceases to be, when he ceases to think. Action may be suspended, while capacity continues; and the dissolution of one instrument may be succeeded by the substitution of another.

But, whatever weight these observations may have with the Materialist, until he can reconcile with our notions of possibility the existence of a substance perpetually changing, yet conscious of its continued identity, or can explain how the feeling of personal unity and indivisibility can be compatible with a substance composed of parts, the hypothesis of materialism must be pronounced, if not impossible, to be improbable in the extreme. And further, until he can remove what by his own arguments must be deemed a contradiction, until he can shew by reasoning, or by facts, facts more pertinent and analogous, than he has yet adduced, that the aggregate powers of any system can be any thing else, than the sum of the powers of the individual parts, or that the powers of the whole are not in every instance, with which we are acquainted, the powers of all the parts, his hypothesis must be rejected as false, if not absurd. He may

adduce examples to prove, that the brain, as a mere organ, is necessary to thought, that the mental capacity depends on the state of the organization, and that there subsists between them an intimate connection; but beyond these phenomena we maintain, that no physiological argument can go. The power to move depends on the strength of the muscles, the clearness of vision on the goodness of the eye, and the capacity of thought on the perfection of the brain; but we repeat, that it is as absurd to consider the eye to be the seeing, the ear the hearing, or the brain the conscious, thinking, willing being, as to confound the instrument with the artificer.

That the Materialist, and the Immaterialist feel each the difficulties, with which his hypothesis is embarrassed is evident; and hence some of the contending parties have evinced a disposition mutually to approximate. The Materialist, perceiving the utter dissimilarity between the essential properties of matter, and the powers of perception and volition, has endeavoured to obviate the difficulty by subtilizing matter, and reducing it to nothing but points of attraction and repulsion. Some Immaterialists, on the other hand, have assigned to the im-

material principle extension, locality, and mobility. With the latter we are not inclined to concur. The Immaterialist is not bound to reconcile his notions of an immaterial being with the modes of a material substance; nor does he adopt his hypothesis, until after due examination he finds, that it is impossible to explain the phenomena of mind, on any principles of mere physical agency. It is sufficient for him, that he has ample and rational ground for believing, that there is something in the constitution of man, which is not material, something, which perceives, thinks, and wills, something as distinct from matter, and as unlike to it, as attraction, repulsion, absorption and assimilation are dissimilar to perception, consciousness, memory, reason, and volition. Not feeling it therefore incumbent on him to reconcile the modes of a material with those of an immaterial being, he disclaims every intermediate hypothesis as unnecessary, if not impossible. What is not material must be immaterial. There can be no medium. Every attempt to reconcile the two doctrines the consistent Immaterialist considers to be equally fruitless, as unphilosophical. It would be a dereliction of his

hypothesis. It would be to acknowledge an analogy between two substances, between which no possible similitude can exist. The Immaterialist not only reasons inconsistently, and involves himself in unnecessary difficulties, but abandons the impregnable ground, on which his hypothesis rests, when he concedes, that unless the soul has locality, and is therefore extended, he cannot conceive it, or believe in its existence. By such concession he acknowledges a doctrine, against which we strenuously protest; namely, that our senses are the only criterions of all possible existence. We conclude with one observation.

Man in every stage and condition of his being, is occupied with sensible objects. These at all times engage his chief attention. In his earliest and rudest state of existence, he thinks of nothing but providing for the necessities of corporeal nature. Of his mental constitution he is profoundly ignorant. Seeing nothing around him but matter and its changing forms, he has no conception of the possibility of any other, than material substance. If surrounding phenomena should impress him with the belief, that there are beings superior to him-

self, he imagines them to be corporeal. He entertains no apprehension of any existent, which is not visible or tangible. He is a Materialist. As his experience however extends, he becomes more and more acquainted with the qualities and properties of physical objects. Ages elapse before he proceeds beyond the limits prescribed by external sense. But, as he progresses in knowledge, his curiosity is proportionably excited; and acquiring, in the advancement of society, accompanied with some degree of civilization, more leisure for reflection, he begins to look inward to his own mind, and mark with attention, what passes there. When he becomes acquainted with its various faculties, and what they are capable of accomplishing, observing also the subserviency of the body to the government of the will, he perceives, that his mental powers are so unlike to the qualities and properties of gross matter, that they must belong, he concludes, to something of a more refined character, than brute material substance. Unable, however, to divest himself of the notion, that nothing can exist, which may not be seen or touched, he forms a conception of some attenuated matter, some

aerial being, by whatever name it may be called, whether soul, or breath, or spirit, which lives, and thinks within him. It is still, however, material; and he perceives on reflection, that the difficulty, though apparently diminished, is not removed. He is thence led to proceed one step farther, and to conclude, that the simple indivisible being, which he believes himself to be, can have no resemblance to matter, which is composed of parts.

Immaterialism then, it would seem, is not the doctrine of a rude and uncultivated mind. It is the result of examination and reflection. It can obtain only, when philosophy has shed her light over the constitution of man, as an intelligent being; and, wherever it does obtain, is an infallible evidence of considerable progress in metaphysical science.

The hypothesis of Materialism is what man, guided by sense only, naturally adopts —a hypothesis, which his continual communication with material objects, has a natural tendency to suggest, and to recommend. It is its inadequacy, however, to explain the phenomena of mind, that reduces the philosopher to the necessity of maintaining,

that they cannot belong to a material substance. He feels the difficulties which attend the adoption of this alternative; but they are the difficulties arising from the limitation of his perceptions to sensible objects. He presumes not to say, what the soul is; but he is persuaded, that it is not material. He denies it to be a property, or an effect; and affirms it to be a substance and a cause, imperceptible indeed by corporeal organs, but known through internal sense and reflection, by its powers and properties, as matter is known through external sense, by its sensible qualities. Of neither substance, in the abstract, can we form any conception.

ESSAY IV.

ON A

FUTURE STATE.

CHAPTER I.

SECTION I.

" Ουδε τουτο πωποτε επεισθην, ὡς ἡ ψυχη, ἑως μεν αν εν θνητῳ σωματι ᾖ, ζῃ· ὁταν δε τουτου απαλλαγῃ, τεθνηκε."—XEN. DE INSTIT. CYRI, Lib. 8.

" Ex ista vita discedo, tanquam ex hospitio, non tanquam ex domo; commorandi enim natura diversorium nobis, non habitandi locum dedit."—CIC. DE SEN. *ad fin.*

MAN, while he lives in the recollection of the past, by a law of his nature, looks forward to the future. He perceives, that his existence here is temporary; and, by the dissolution of others around him, he is daily reminded of the fate, which sooner or later awaits himself. He beholds the companions of his youth, and the friends of his riper years, sinking into the grave; and he knows that the hour is fixed in Heaven's decree, when he also must bow to death's stern com-

mand, and be consigned to his parent earth. "Is this, then," he eagerly asks, "to be my ultimate destination? Is death to put a final period to my being? Is there no hope beyond the grave?" In the solution of this question, every reflecting mind must feel the deepest interest. No man can be indifferent to existence, but he, who has nothing to enjoy, or nothing to hope. The thought of annihilation, and becoming like "a clod of the field," naturally fills the soul with horror.

But this is not all. Man is a sympathetic being; he lives in others, as well as in himself. His solicitude on the subject, therefore, becomes peculiarly painful, when he beholds all that was dear to his heart on earth, the wife perhaps of his bosom, or the child of his hopes, and stay of his declining years, committed to the grave. When he hears the solemn sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust must thou return," the sigh heaving in his bosom, and the tear starting from his eye, it is then, that in silent anguish, he asks, Is she, whom I loved, beyond all that the world can give, whose sympathy shared my griefs, and doubled my joys, who wept when I was sad, and rejoiced when I was cheerful, gone for ever? Shall I never more hear the voice

which, after the vexations of the day, used to speak my troubled mind to peace—never more behold the smiles, which were wont to dispel from my brow the cloud of care, and "charm the ills of life away?" Are we thus to part, never, never to meet again? Has the grave closed for ever on the child of my heart, whose arm upheld my tottering steps, and to whose affectionate hand I looked to close my eyes, when I should bid the world and him my last farewell? With what rapturous joy would the husband and the parent, thus sunk in grief, hail the assurance, that the living and the dead should meet again, to part no more? To the man of sensibility, who has experienced the agonizing pang which the heart must feel, when the most endearing bonds are torn asunder, no subject can be so interesting as the question of a future state. Even the existence of a Deity, and the doctrine of a Providence, lose much of their importance, if unaccompanied with the conviction, that man shall not perish with the dissolution of the body.

When we behold a fellow creature suddenly struck by the hand of death, or see him gradually decline, and droop and die, when we behold every faculty of mind and

body apparently annihilated,—when we perceive the tongue silent, the eyes closed, the limbs rigid, the heart cold, the pulse motionless, and the whole frame soon afterwards reduced to dust, is there, or is there not, reason to conclude, that the once sentient and percipient being is not extinct for ever? Whether, or on what ground, are we to hope, that he will ever live again? If there exists such a hope, in what is it founded?

SECTION II.

A Future state possible, even on the hypothesis of Materialism. To draw precipitate conclusions from appearances is frequently to judge in error. Possibility not to be measured by our acquaintance with causes and effects.

To enquire into the possibility of a future state, even on the hypothesis of Materialism, must appear to every rational and consistent Theist, who contemplates the physical wonders exhibited in himself, and every where around him, to be an idle and unnecessary disquisition. The hypothesis that man, though wholly a material substance, may survive the dissolution of his body, with whatever difficulty it may be accompanied, implies no

absurdity. The continuation of his being, therefore, is within the range of that power, by which every effect can be accomplished, which involves no contradiction. Nay, it is not extravagant to affirm, were even the attributes of the Divine Being to be circumscribed within the sphere of our limited experience, that there is more of wisdom and of power manifested in the phenomena of nature, than would suffice to effect the restoration of our being.

But, though we are ready enough to acknowledge in the general, that all things are possible to Deity, we are at the same time prone, in individual cases, notwithstanding this admission, to draw precipitate conclusions from mere appearances, and to pronounce an effect impossible, because we know not, how it is to be accomplished. This is a propensity, to which, we believe, all of us are more or less liable; but which it is of supreme importance, that we should endeavour to correct. Physical possibility is not to be measured by our conceptions. If the few observations on this subject, which are here offered, should contribute to check this propensity, and to lessen the difficulties, which present themselves to the Materialist,

the preliminary purpose of the author will be fully answered.

In the first place, then, we should bear in mind, that to judge from mere appearances, is often to judge in error. When we contemplate the phenomena of death, and the state, to which the human frame is reduced after its dissolution, we should be disposed most probably, from the facts presented to our view, to conclude, that death is the final termination of our existence. The animal functions cease, the senses perish, the body is resolved into its native elements; and these being scattered, perhaps, over the surface of the earth, by the winds of heaven, enter into a variety of other organic forms. Here we perceive nothing which can induce the expectation, that he, who once lived, and is now dead, will live again. The bare possibility of such a renovation we might even question, ignorant as we are of the means, by which it could be accomplished. But, though appearances are unfavourable to the hope of a renewed existence, and though from the laws of nature, as known to us, we are incapable of conceiving how animation and consciousness can be restored; it would be a rash and unwarrant-

able conclusion to affirm, that such an event is physically impossible. Appearances certainly forbid the hope of future reanimation. But a very imperfect acquaintance with the phenomena of nature may suffice to teach us caution, in drawing conclusions from mere appearances. That such inferences are often erroneous is even proverbially true; and must be so evident to every reflecting mind, that it may be judged superfluous to illustrate the position by a single example. Our very introduction into life furnishes an instance, which may alone suffice to teach us, that to conclude possibility or impossibility from appearances only, is in every investigation an unsafe, as well as an unphilosophical, procedure.

Could any being, as Hartley observes, of equal understanding with man, and acquainted with the state of the *fœtus in utero*, and the means provided for its nourishment in that state, but ignorant of the effect, consequent on its birth, suppose, judging from appearances, that the birth of the infant is an introduction to a new and independent life? Would not the change of the child's condition—its separation from its mother, from whom it derived its nutriment, as na-

turally lead us to conclude, that the infant would die, as that a twig or branch, torn from the parent stock, would wither and perish? Reasoning from analogy, and from appearances also, we should draw this conclusion; but we all know, that it would be erroneous.

Let us take a case, more analogous to that which is under our consideration. Let us suppose a person versed in every art and science, chemistry excepted, had exhibited to him the common experiment of a metal dissolved in an acid; judging merely from what he saw, and what he knew, he would infer, that the metal was irrecoverably lost. Acquainted with no physical process, by which its restoration could be effected, experience furnishing no fact, which could lead him to believe it possible, he would conclude with no less certainty, that the metal was irrecoverable, than the sceptic infers, that the restoration of life after death is a physical impossibility. His conclusion, however, would be false. Who would suppose, judging from appearances, that a grub, apparently dead, would revive into another and more beautiful form; and that its torpidity, or apparent death, was

only a prelude to its existence in a higher sphere? It would be easy to multiply examples; but these may suffice to teach us caution, if we wish to avoid error, in drawing conclusions of impossibility from mere appearances, when a power is concerned, whose energies we are wholly incapable of comprehending.

In connexion with these observations, I would observe, in the second place, that such erroneous judgments generally proceed from a disposition to limit all physical and moral possibility to our conceptions of its extent. Unacquainted with the means, by which any singular or unprecedented effect may be produced, knowing no physical law to which it can be referred, and experience furnishing no evidence of the fact, we are too apt hastily to pronounce it to be impossible and incredible. Now, we should bear in mind, that this disposition betrays narrow and contracted views, and would introduce a scepticism into philosophy not less injurious to the interests of truth, than the blindest credulity, or the most childish and implicit faith. To deny the possibility of an event, because we have never seen it, or because we know no physical or moral cause, by which it can be

effected, is to bound possibility by our limited experience. It is to affirm, that there is no law of nature, with which we are not acquainted, no possible process intellectual or physical, which we cannot conceive, no wisdom, no power, whose energies we cannot comprehend and measure. When the king of Siam denied the possibility of water's becoming a hard substance, and capable of sustaining an immense weight, he reasoned from his own, and general experience, as far as he knew. Neither he, nor any of his people, had ever seen this element, but in a state of fluidity; nor had he any conception of the means, by which it could be converted into a solid mass. But because he could not conceive the cause, by which such an effect could be produced, was he justified in denying the possibility of the fact? Or was his experience a legitimate measure of physical possibility? Let us suppose a being possessed of the same intellectual powers with us, but endowed with only one sense, namely, that of smell, would he be warranted in affirming it to be absolutely impossible for a person to distinguish between an orange and an apple, but by the olfactory organ? If he were informed, that beings existed, who were capa-

ble of making this distinction by other means than the sense of smell, having no conception of these means he might, if disposed to measure possibility by his own experience, pronounce the information to be utterly incredible. Would his conclusion be correct? Or would one endowed with the sense of smell, and that of taste, be justified in denying it to be possible, for any person to discriminate between the two fruits, without applying them to the nose, or to the palate? Nothing, perhaps, could appear to the rude savage, or the untaught rustic, to be more impossible, than to ascertain the distance of the sun and moon from the earth, and also from each other, because he could have no conception of the mode, by which the measurement can be effected; but by denying its possibility, he would only betray his own ignorance. Tell a nation of blind men, as Locke observes, that the figure, the distance, and the magnitude, of objects may be known without the sense of touch, and they would pronounce the information false and incredible. They could form no idea of any other means, by which this could be accomplished, than by pacing the distance, and feeling the objects. Of the sense of sight they could have no conception: its very existence would be to them

incomprehensible. No conclusion from reason or experience could appear to them more indubitable, than that the distance and figure can be learned only by the feet, or the hands, or the former sometimes by the sense of hearing. By what other means, they would confidently ask, is it possible to ascertain this quality, or that accident? Yet we know, that, in arguing from their own experience to the impossibility of the fact, they would argue in ignorance, and conclude a falsehood. How many mysteries, says a candid and eminent philosopher *, must a blind man believe, on the authority of others? Let us imagine with Diderot †, a colloquy among five individuals, each endowed with only one of the five senses. Every four of these individuals would seem to the fifth, either liars, or lunatics; and he, who possessed the faculty of sight, the most quick and apprehensive sense of all, would be pronounced to be the greatest liar, or the wildest madman, because he knew the most.

What an additional fund of knowledge might not an additional sense present to us? How many difficulties might it not remove? How many mysterious facts

* Reid's Essays. † Brown's Lectures.

might it not explain? How many things might it shew to be possible, which at present we deem impossible? Though of the essence of matter we should know no more, than we do at present, because, by no assemblage of sensorial powers, could it be known to us, unless merely as it affects our senses; yet, when we consider, what a field of knowledge is furnished by the visual organ, in addition to what is afforded by the four other senses, we may easily conceive, that another sense still more capacious and more acute might explain and render credible, many phenomena which appear to us, as unaccountable, as the perceptions of a seeing are incredible to a blind man. The universe abounds in effects, produced by means, the operation of which we are wholly incapable of comprehending. We know nothing but facts; in these all our researches terminate; their causes are inscrutable by human sagacity. We trace the succession of antecedents and consequents; we remark the mode or law, by which the succession takes place; we assign a common name to similar phenomena, and here our knowledge ends. Every discovery in nature presents us with a new phenomenon, and innumerable others will remain to engage the

attention, and to exercise the ingenuity, of man. Antecedently to experience, who could anticipate a single result? Let the most enlightened philosopher examine earth, air, and water, and say, whether without experience he could infer, or believe, that these, by any conceivable process, could form themselves into a rose, an oak, or a cedar. We are surrounded with facts, which *a priori* we could never anticipate. To suppose, that all possibility is confined to our experience, or that He who gave life, cannot restore it, is extreme ignorance, combined with unpardonable presumption.

All this, it may be said, is very true; but we must reason from what we know. If our arguments are not founded in facts, but are mere suppositions, they can have no weight but with those, who believe, only because they wish to believe. We perceive, it may be said, certain organized bodies to have life and intellect; but, when disorganization takes place, the body is decomposed; its component particles are scattered, entering into other organisms; and the intellect, with which they were once associated, ceases to exist. We are acquainted with no physical fact, no established law, which can induce us to believe,

that these particles can ever be reunited, so as to form the same organism, to which they originally belonged, and to be accompanied with the consciousness of personal identity. The supposition seems to involve a glaring absurdity. To which of a thousand organic forms, animal and vegetable, is a particle of matter, which has made part of all, ultimately to pertain? Is it to a man, to a lion, or to an oak? Is it to John, to James, or to Andrew?

This argument proceeds on an assumption, which we deny to be necessary to our conclusion. It takes for granted, that the same individual particles, which constituted the corporeal frame at death, are to be re-assembled, and re-united, so as to re-form the same organism. If we maintained this doctrine, the argument would have some weight. But we do not profess to know, how our existence is to be restored; our ignorance, however, can furnish no just ground for pronouncing it impossible, if its probability be established on sufficient evidence. We are not to assume, that thought, and the consciousness of identity, are to be restored, though this is possible, to the same matter, or to the same form. If the Deity can continue to me dur-

ing this life, this thought, and this consciousness, though not one particle of my body, as existing a year ago, exists in it now, there can be no difficulty in believing, that they may hereafter be re-united to a material substance, different from the present: for to the consciousness of personal identity sameness of substance is not necessary; so at least the continual change, which takes place in our corporeal frame, would lead us to conclude. If sameness, or similarity, of organization, be all that is requisite, it will not be doubted, that the same organization may be restored, accompanied with the consciousness of personal identity. And if we possess this feeling, it matters not, from what it results, where it resides, or with what substance it is clothed.

If the Materialist, abandoning the hypothesis, that the consciousness of personal identity is reconcileable with an unceasing change of cerebral substance, maintain the possibility, that a part of the brain, a part perhaps infinitesimally small, may, notwithstanding the changes, which the other parts undergo, remain the same, and be equally capable of resisting change after death, to whatever variety of conditions it may be subjected; may it not, after a dormancy of ages,

like a seed re-exerting its vegetative power, regain its energies by the operation of laws, unknown to us, but ordained by Him, who first gave it existence?

A person, unacquainted with the structure of the human frame, naturally refers the power of vision to the eye only. He never saw the brain; he never, perhaps, heard of its name. But an acquaintance with physiology teaches us, that to the sense of sight, an organ beyond the eye is necessary. The anatomist traces vision from the beam of light to the pupil, from the pupil to the lenses, from the lenses to the retina, and the optic nerve, and from these to the brain. Here he stops. May there not be an ulterior substance, too subtle, or too minute for the cognisance of sense, infinitesimally small, the seat of thought and consciousness, which no physical causes can destroy, and which, in all the situations, into which it may be placed, remains unchangeably the same?

We have no way of determining, says the excellent Butler in his "Analogy," "what is the certain bulk of the living being, each man calls himself; and yet, till it be determined, that it is larger in bulk, than the solid elementary particles of matter, which there

is no ground to think any natural power can dissolve, there is no sort of reason to think death to be the dissolution of the living being, even though it should not be absolutely indiscerptible." And, when we perceive in the smallest insect something resembling human foresight and human ingenuity, when we see the bee, for example, constructing its cell with mathematical accuracy, we can have no difficulty in believing, that there is no particle of matter so small, as not to be capable of being the substratum of perception and thought, admitting the hypothesis of the Materialist to be true, to whom these observations are specially addressed.

We certainly perceive developments in some animals, which at least serve to shew, that under the exterior of our present corporeal frame, may be contained the germ of another and better form. We find in some a complete disorganization taking place, this succeeded by another organization, this structure in turn disorganized, and replaced by a third. And it is observed, that the several modes, in which the animal exists, are as different, one from another, as dissimilar species; the same insect at one time living in the water, at another time on the ground, and at

another in the air. We even find organs essential to the life of the insect completely disappearing, and every vestige of them vanishing; and yet this disorganization, so far from terminating its being, that it is a necessary prelude to another existence. Can we doubt, that the wisdom and power, by which such curious developments and transformations are effected, are capable of continuing or restoring our existence, after the disorganization, or even after the decomposition, of our frame?*

* Spence and Kirby in their Entomology, after shewing, that there is nothing, which can be regarded as miraculous, in the transformation of caterpillars, offers some interesting and beautiful observations, which, we are persuaded the reader who has not perused the work, will thank us, for quoting.

"Nor does this explanation, though it precludes the idea of that resemblance, in every particular, which, at one time, was thought to obtain between the metamorphosis of insects, especially of the *lepidoptera* order, and the resurrection of the body, do away that general analogy, which cannot fail to strike every one, who at all considers the subject. Even Swammerdam, whose observations have proved, that the analogy is not so complete, as had been imagined, speaking of the metamorphosis of insects, uses these strong words: *This process is formed, in so remarkable a manner in butterflies, that we see therein the resurrection painted before our eyes, and exemplified, so as to be examined by*

"To affirm," says the author of "Man a Machine," "that an immortal machine is a chimera, a fiction of the brain, appears to be as absurd, as it would seem in caterpillars, when they see the dead bodies of their kind,

our hands. To see indeed a caterpillar crawling upon the earth, sustained by the most ordinary kinds of food, which, when it has existed a few weeks or months, under this humble form, its appointed work being finished, passes into an intermediate state of seeming death, when it is wound up in a kind of shroud, and encased in a coffin, and is most commonly buried under the earth, (though sometimes its sepulchre is in the water, and, at others, in various substances in the air,) and after this creature, and others of its tribe, have remained their destined time in this death-like state, to behold earth, air, and water, give up their several prisoners; to survey them, when called by the warmth of the solar beam, they burst from their sepulchres, cast off their cerements, from this state of torpid inactivity, come forth, as a bride out of her chamber,—to survey them, I say, arrayed in their nuptial glory, prepared to enjoy a new and more exalted condition of life, in which all their powers are developed, and they are arrived at the perfection of their nature, when, no longer confined to earth, they can traverse the fields of air, their food is the nectar of flowers, and love begins his blissful reign; who, that witnesses this interesting scene, can help seeing in it a lively representation of man in his three-fold state of existence, and more especially of that happy day, when, at the call of the great Son of Righteousness, all that are in their graves shall come forth, the sea shall give up her dead, and death being swallowed up of life, the nations of the blessed shall live and love to the ages of eternity."—Vol. i. p. 72.

bitterly to lament the fate of their species, which would seem to them to be utterly destroyed. The soul of these insects is too narrow and confined to be able to comprehend the transformation of their nature. Never did any of the acutest of them entertain the least notion, that he would become a butterfly. It is the very same case with us. What do we know of our future destiny, more than we do of our original?"

In short, if identity of substance be not necessary to personal identity, then it is evident, that this personal identity is perfectly consistent with a new corporeal frame. If identity of substance be necessary, it is possible, that the power of thinking, admitting the hypothesis of Materialism, may be attached to an unchangeable and indestructible monad.

If the Materialist relinquishes both these hypotheses as improbable, and resolves the feeling of personal identity into identity of organization, as its cause, then there is no difficulty in believing, that our present organization may be restored. And I repeat, that, whether there be a new body, or a new organization, the consciousness of personal identity constitutes the same intelligent and

moral being. For to suppose, that a person can know himself to be the same, and yet a different, being, is to suppose a contradiction.

Still, it may be said, this is mere conjecture and hypothesis, without a single known fact, to give it credibility. True; these are speculations, and not certainties. If the restoration of our existence after death were a matter of fact, or a phenomenon attested by experience, it would be no longer a question of possibility; nor would any attempt be necessary to remove its apparent improbability, by any reference to analogous physical facts. It is to this question, and this only, to which our attention is at present directed.

The preceding observations are reducible to the three following arguments.

1st, If the brain be the thinking substance, it is evident, from its unceasing change, and repeated renovations, that identity of substance is not necessary to the feeling of personal identity. This feeling, therefore, may be associated with a new corporeal frame. It is not the exterior garb, but the internal sense, which constitutes the same individual thinking being.

2dly, If, according to the hypothesis of some Materialists, the brain be never entirely changed; and if some monad, or infinitesimally small particle, the seat of thought, and clothed with an organized exterior, may remain through life invariably the same, then this atom, though its power should be suspended by the dissolution of the body, and the destruction of its *exuviæ*, may, after a dormancy of ages, by physical laws, unknown to us, regain its vitality, accompanied with our perceptive and rational faculties, along with the feeling of personal identity. There seems to be nothing more wonderful in this renovation, than in the excitation of the vegetative power of a seed, after it has been suspended by unfavourable situations.

3dly, If the conviction of personal identity result from sameness of organization, then there is no difficulty in believing, that the same organization may be restored after death, associated with the same persuasion of identity.

In conclusion I would add one observation. If we believe in the existence of an Omnipotent Creator, we can entertain no doubt, that He, who, at first communicated life to inert matter by means incomprehensible to us, can by the same Almighty power

restore it, though the mode be to our capacities wholly inconceivable. The secret springs of physical and intellectual agency are inaccessible to human scrutiny; and there may be laws in operation in the universe of God, of which our narrow senses can give us no information, and of which we can form no conception. Nature, and its energies, must ever be obedient to the will of the Supreme First Cause.

These observations are offered to the consideration of the Materialist, who believes man to be only one homogeneous substance. But, if the arguments, which have been urged, render it morally certain, that the soul of man is immaterial, or that there exists within us a principle, in its nature and operations bearing no resemblance to matter, and though dependent at present on corporeal organs for its agency, yet substantially distinct and independent; the continuation of our being, after the dissolution of the body, can be viewed in no other light, than as a natural event. No substance can be annihilated, but by the will of Him, who gave it being. How its energies are to be exerted, without the aid of those organs, which it now employs, is a question, which, with our very limited knowledge, it is impossible to resolve.

We are equally ignorant of the secret means, though we know the results, by which every physical phenomenon is produced. But, if the soul be a distinct substance from the body, and not necessarily perishable with it, its existence, we have every reason to believe, will be preserved; and must therefore be preserved for some end. We may consequently conclude, that it will not remain for ever in a state of inaction. Another corporeal frame may be provided for it, adapted to improving capacities, and to a higher state of existence. Is there any thing more wonderful in the supposition, that man should have new organs of sensation, perception, and thought, after the former organization has been destroyed, than in the fact, that organs, at one period necessary to the existence of an insect, should at another be cast off, and the whole system, which supported them vanish, the insect have a new frame, and arrive at a higher grade of existence?* Nay, there is nothing repugnant to reason, in the supposition, that, being disengaged at death from its dependence on organic aid, the soul may be capable of exercising its powers by properties of its own,

* Kirby and Spence s Entomology, Vol. i. p. 71.

either innate, or communicated by the Author of its being. As the images remain after the visual organ is destroyed, so the ideas, sentiments, and affections may continue to be, after the medium of their production has been dissolved. But, whatever may be the mode of its future existence, and agency, whether any organic structure be, or be not, necessary to its operations, if we have every reason to believe, that not a single atom of our corporeal frame will perish, we have surely still stronger ground for presuming, that the immaterial substance, that, which truly constitutes the man, the body being merely its instrument, will never die.

SECTION III.

The continual progress of the Soul towards perfection, an argument of its Immortality, stated, and examined.

It has been eloquently urged by Addison, as an argument in favour of the immortality of the soul, that it is continually progressing towards perfection, without the possibility of ever arriving at it. Is it reconcileable, it is asked, with infinite wisdom and benevolence,

to suppose, that Deity would create a mind, capable of expanding its faculties, and advancing in useful knowledge, through an eternity of ages, and, after a few short years, consign it to annihilation? Is the soul, susceptible as it is of endless improvement, created for only this brief existence?

If the foundation of this argument were unquestionable, the conclusion would be admitted as highly probable, if not morally certain. But it has been objected, that the argument assumes as fact, what almost universal experience contradicts. The faculties of the soul, like those of the body, are subject to decay. The aged feel, that their mental powers decline with their corporeal frame. Memory fails them. The scenes of early life, indeed, they generally remember; and to recount them constitutes one of their most delightful gratifications; but of the events of later years, many slip from their recollection, without leaving even a trace behind them. The names even of the most familiar objects they sometimes find it impossible to recal. Mental impressions, unless strong, or frequently repeated, soon vanish. Imagination, too, loses much of her magic power. Her energies become more

languid, her excursions less frequent, and her sphere more circumscribed. The poet at thirty, and the same poet at sixty, differ, it has been observed, like the meridian from the setting sun. Age renders our perceptive powers less acute, our judgments less vigorous, and the whole soul more disposed to quietude and inaction. Easily fatigued with those speculations, in which it once delighted to indulge, it courts amusement, or seeks repose.

It is doubtless true, that examples occasionally present themselves of men's retaining their mental powers in full vigour, even to extreme old age; but such examples are rare; they are remarked as extraordinary; and being regarded as exceptions, they serve to confirm the general truth, that the mind gradually decays with the body. It is a fact, however, worthy of our attention, that, while the intellectual powers are thus impaired, as the corporeal frame declines through age, the consciousness of personal identity remains entire to the latest period of our existence. The dying man, whatever changes either body or mind may have undergone, during the course of a long life, feels himself still to be one and the self same being. This

uninterrupted and unimpaired consciousness of personal identity, peculiar as it is to man, resisting all the causes, which effect alterations in our physical and moral character, identifying us in all the thoughts, words, and actions of a whole life, and accompanying us to the last moment of reflection, may furnish some ground for believing, that it will connect us with futurity, and that its subject will not perish with the dissolution of the body.

But let it be granted, that the objection urged against Addison's celebrated argument either weakens or destroys its validity, if restricted to mental improvement, or the advancement of intellectual capacity; there is a fact, to which the reasoning may be unexceptionably and forcibly extended. For be it remembered, that man possesses qualities and capacities of a higher order, than those, which are merely perceptive and intellectual, and to which the latter must be regarded as only subservient and secondary. To these the argument appears to be strictly applicable, and to carry with it considerable weight. Our mental energies, it is confessed, are very generally impaired as the body decays; but our moral susceptibilities and

powers suffer no declension by age; but, on the contrary, continue in full vigor, to the close of a lengthened existence. Our devotional feelings are improved by years. It is when the fever of passion subsides, the fascinations of pleasure are past, and the vanities of life cease to interest, that the soul, as if emancipated from the dominion of sense, fixes its desires and hopes on sublimer objects, and delights to commune with the adorable Author of its being. It is then, that piety warms the heart, with a purer, if not more ardent, flame. It is then, man feels it to be his highest happiness to contemplate the works and ways of God, to review with gratitude the numerous testimonies of His parental care in a long period of years past, and to repose with humble confidence in His favour and protection, in what remains of years to come. While engaged in the pursuits of active life, the milder affections of our nature are checked by the jealousies, the rivalries, the contentions, and wrongs, to which the best of men are liable; age withdraws us from the agitations of the world; the turbulent passions are less frequently excited; and our disposition to cherish the peaceable and benevolent affections of our nature

is progressively strengthened. Experience, also, has taught us, wherein true enjoyment consists. It is thus we learn, that true knowledge is wisdom, that wisdom is virtue, and virtue happiness. Age may blunt our perceptions, impair our memory, subdue the imagination, and weaken the understanding; but it opposes no bar to our improvement in virtue. To the pious and benevolent affections of our nature, which are the brightest ornaments of human character, and permanent sources of the purest gratification, the decay of our corporeal frame prescribes no limit. We find the love of the husband, the affection of the parent, the sympathy of the friend, gratitude to benefactors, placability to enemies, and charity towards all men, displaying themselves in the extremity of age, as powerfully, as in earlier years.

Now, it is not knowledge, but piety and virtue, which are the chief ends of man; and in these we seem susceptible of indefinite improvement. And it is a fact, worthy of our attention, and bearing closely on the present argument, that, while animal appetite is palled by indulgence, and ceases entirely, when its end is answered, the pious and benevolent affections are never satiated;

the delights accompanying them never cloy; they seem intended to be immortal. If these affections, then, suffer no decay with the corporeal infirmities of years, and the declension of our intellectual powers, but, on the contrary, seem capable of increasing refinement; it would appear a probable conclusion, that they would not have been rendered susceptible of attaining higher perfection, if this were to be the only theatre for their exercise. "Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall become unnecessary, whether there be languages, they shall cease, whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away."

The argument then, as applied to our capacity for advancing in piety and virtue, which are man's noblest ornaments, and highest happiness, leads us to hope, that this capacity has not been given to us in vain.

SECTION IV.

Argument from Conscience.

It is offered as an argument for the existence of a state of retribution, that there is implanted in us by Deity a power, "the prin-

ciple of moral action," whose province it is to demonstrate the path of duty, to pronounce sentence on our conduct, as virtuous or vicious, and, by its awards of approbation, or censure, to apprise us of a future judgment, and of that retributive justice, which awaits virtue and vice at the supreme tribunal of the Great Arbiter of human destiny. This power is conscience. It has been called the voice of God, speaking within us, the vicegerent of the Deity, the Oracle, which, while it registers what is passed, predicts, also, what is to come. "Why," it is asked, "is the good man tranquil and serene, while every object around him is dark and lowering, threatening and terrific?" His conscience tells him, that he has no reason to fear the anger of Heaven, for that He, who rules the world, is his Friend. When calamity assails him, while he feels the stroke, he bears it with fortitude, because he is at peace with God and with his own mind; persuaded also, that every evil that befals him, is benevolently intended, and will ultimately issue in augmented enjoyment. Why, on the contrary, do the guilty tremble after the perpetration of a crime, when there is no human eye to see them—no tongue but their own

to disclose their guilt? Is this power of conscience implanted in us in vain? Is it not designed by the Author of our being to express His approbation of virtue, and His abhorrence of vice? And, if we contemplate the promiscuous dispensation of good and evil in the economy of human life, and, adopting the doctrine of philosophical liberty, regard the justice of Deity as a distinct attribute from His benevolence, does it not seem to be intended as a presage of that complete retribution, which awaits the just and the unjust in a future world, and which is now only in an incipient and imperfect state? And even on the contrary hypothesis, it seems evident, that this faculty is designed to stimulate us to improvement in virtue, and to correct a disposition to vice, and thus to fit us for that happiness, for which, from the benevolence of Deity, we have reason to presume, that man was created. We must either believe, that this intention of the Deity is completed in this state, and that conscience effects all the purposes for which it was given; or, if we reject this opinion, as manifestly repugnant to the obvious moral condition of mankind, we must either conclude, that the designs of Deity, in implanting within us the

power of conscience, are eternally frustrated; or that another state awaits us, in which its awards will be continued, until vice and all its evils shall be for ever excluded, and piety, virtue, and happiness shall be established through the endless revolutions of eternity. But, as it would be a contradiction to believe, that the counsels of Omnipotence can be defeated, we must conclude, that this faculty, evidently intended for our improvement in virtue and happiness, will not ultimately fail of its effect; and that its salutary influence, its pains and its pleasures, will be continued, until the scheme of Providence in the production of our system shall be finally perfected *.

* The dissolution of the body can effect no instantaneous change in the habits of the soul. Whatever may be our moral character at death, the same must accompany us into another state. The sting of sin must bring its punishment. But, from the benevolence of the Divine Being, we have every reason to hope, that the sufferings of the wicked hereafter will be remedial, that they will be proportioned to their various degrees of guilt, and continued until the purposes of the Divine Being shall be fully accomplished. The Christian, surely, should be delighted to indulge this hope; and, though there be one or two passages in the New Testament which *seem* opposed to it, the general tenor of the Gospel appears favourable to this expectation. Reason forbids us to admit the Manichean doctrine of two eternal principles, one good, and the other evil; or to believe, that evil of any

To the argument drawn from the faculty of conscience, in favour of a future state of existence, it has been objected, that this is not a natural, but a factitious, power. It is represented, as "an acquired habit of referring our actions to some established rule, and of applauding, or condemning, them, as they agree or disagree with the standard assumed." "Conscience," it is added, "depends wholly upon education, both as to the standard, and the sanction." *

That conscience implies a perception of the agreement or disagreement of our actions with a given standard, accompanied with the correspondent feeling of either pleasure or pain, is a truth, respecting which there can be no dispute. But we deny, that our distinctions of right and wrong are entirely the effects of education; and we believe, that how discordant soever may have been, or may still be, the opinions of mankind re-

kind will be eternal. Such a notion would amount to a denial of the infinite perfections and universal sovereignty of the Supreme Being. How much more pleasing to our best affections is the thought, that the time will come, when "every creature, in heaven, in earth, under the earth, and in the sea, and all that were in them, *will be found* praising God."

* Belsham's Elements of Moral Philosophy, p. 348.

specting moral obligations, conscience, as an approving and condemning faculty, is innate, and not factitious.

It can scarcely be necessary to observe, that the perception of the agreement or disagreement of our actions, with an established rule, is quite distinct from the consequent pleasurable or painful feeling. Nay, this perception may obtain, where there is no sentiment either of gratification or dissatisfaction. I do an action, which my reason approves, or my religion enjoins. I perceive the accordance of this action with my notions of moral duty. This is a mere perception. It precedes the action, and is quite distinct from that self-approbation, of which I am conscious, as consequent on the discharge of a religious or moral obligation. The question then is, whence arises the pleasure, which accompanies the perception, that my conduct has been accordant with some acknowledged rule? Is it the applauding voice of a power implanted within me; or is it a factitious feeling—a mere habit of approving that, which I have been taught and accustomed to approve in myself and others? If the latter hypothesis be asserted, the question naturally presents itself, whence did the habit

originate? Does self-approbation necessarily follow from the commendation of parents, of tutors, or associates? Or can it be shewn, that the relation between them, in the infant mind, is that of cause and effect? The child is praised for conforming to some parental admonition; he may be pleased, as his little vanity may be flattered, by this approbation; and an action, at first indifferent, may become agreeable; but this pleasure differs widely from that self-complacency, which arises from the consciousness of doing what is right. We perceive no necessary connection between approbation by others, and self-commendation; nor can we comprehend, how any sentiment or feeling of others towards us should generate in our minds the same sentiment and feeling towards ourselves. This hypothesis, we apprehend, will not account for the habit.

It may be true, that we have been accustomed from childhood to call one action right, and another wrong; but this perception of the difference will not account for the pleasure, which we derive from doing the one, and avoiding the other. If the retributive principle is to be resolved into habit, we find no probable explanation of the mode,

in which the habit is generated. For, unless we confound the moral perception, and the moral feeling, which are evidently distinct, or can be persuaded to believe, that self-approbation, and self-reproach, necessarily result from the commendation bestowed, and the censure inflicted by others, and have no other origin, the hypothesis in question must be rejected. It may be, that an action is approved in one age or nation, which is condemned in another; but it will universally be found, notwithstanding this discordancy of opinion, that the observance of the rule, whatever it may be, is followed by self-approbation, and its violation by self-reproach. The retributive principle, therefore, we maintain, is not factitious.

Our next inquiry is, whether our distinctions of moral right and wrong, are wholly the effects of education.

As there are certain instinctive appetites, necessary to the preservation of the animal, and certain fundamental intellectual principles, which reason cannot teach, essential to our advancement in knowledge, so we are inclined to think, that there are also certain moral feelings, which, in the infant state of man, are necessary for the direction of his

conduct, before the complicated relations of civilized life require more certain and more general rules. If, indeed, all our moral notions and sentiments were resolvable into modes of culture, it would follow, that without education all actions would be in themselves indifferent; and that in all cases, where no rule existed, the retributive feeling could have no place. But this we believe to be repugnant to fact. We have a natural antipathy to some actions, and an admiration of others*. This, in many instances, is a wise and necessary provision for the preservation of the species, previously to the establishment of moral laws. If no rule against infanticide existed, a mother would recoil with horror from the murder of her little infant smiling in her face; and would feel the anguish of remorse, if she imbrued her hands in its innocent blood. The ferocious tigress loves her own offspring, and delights to nurse them. It is no argument to say, that infanticide is committed: this merely proves, that one passion or feeling may be overpowered by a stronger, or that our natural sentiments may be perverted by

See note B.

example. The savage, in his native woods, carries in his breast a law, of which he is conscious, and which he spontaneously obeys. The moanings of pain, or the screams of torture, when his passions are not inflamed against the sufferer, excite his compassion, and prompt him to relieve him. There is a sympathy in our nature, by which we place ourselves in the situation of others, and participate in their feelings; and, by this sympathy, we are naturally prompted to do unto them, what we, in their situation, would wish to be done to us.

Difficult as it may be to distinguish between sentiments implanted in our constitution, and those originating in education, we have reason to believe, that our genuine feelings are friendly to the happiness of our fellow-creatures; and that, antecedently to all rule, there are certain actions, to which we are spontaneously prompted, and others, from which we shrink with abhorrence. But, if all our moral sentiments were resolvable into education, it would follow, that man is wholly a factitious being; and that all actions, not affecting ourselves, would be equally indifferent to us; that we should hear the moanings of pain, the shriek

of sorrow, and the laugh of joy, with equal unconcern; that we should behold a fellow-creature writhing in agony, and another relieved from suffering, with one and the same, or with no, emotion; and that benevolence and malignity, love and hatred, might be equally gratifying, or interchange their pleasures and pains, as early impressions might happen to have directed. It would be as easy to convince me, that darkness is as agreeable to the eye, as the light of day; a scream as delightful to the ear, as musical sounds; and that we might be so trained by education, as to make the rose and its thorn equally pleasing to the touch. In every attempt to resolve all moral feelings and emotions into education, it seems uniformly taken for granted, that, because education does much, nature does nothing. That the savage may be taught to exult in the sufferings of his captive enemy, or the tyrant feel a sort of pleasure in satisfying his revenge, is true. But mark the look of either in the moment of gratification, and contrast it with the complacent smile in the countenance of the man, who has just relieved a fellow-creature from distress, and then say, which is the gratification the more congenial to our nature.

While, then, we are ready to acknowledge, that our moral perceptions are mainly dependent on modes of culture, we are at the same time persuaded, that we are by nature formed with susceptibilities of certain pleasing and displeasing emotions, excited by certain passions and actions of ourselves and others. And, whatever contrariety of opinions may obtain respecting moral distinctions, and though conscience may in one man award pleasure, while in another, for the same action, she would inflict pain; it is undeniable, that she never fails to approve, when we do that, which we believe to be right, and censure, when we commit that, which we judge to be wrong. The retributive principle, therefore, seems to be instinctive. And, though familiarity with vice has a natural tendency to weaken our sense of its turpitude, and to repress the chastisements of conscience, the corrective voice of this internal monitor is rarely, if ever, entirely silenced. If it spare habitual offences, long indulgence in which may have rendered us less sensible of their immorality, it never fails to reproach us for other violations of duty. If it sleep for a season, it is generally but to awake with redoubled strength, to

assert its power. In the breast of every good man it is the unceasing voice of gratulation, and a source of pure felicity.

The question then is, how far is this feeling to be regarded, as an earnest or presage of future judgment, or of a state beyond the present? Is this conscious principle implanted, to admonish us of our future destiny, and of the awards of Heaven in another world? Or is it given as an incentive to virtue, and deterrence from vice, for the promotion of general and individual happiness, without any reference to a state of retribution? The latter, it is said, appears to be a possible supposition. The subserviency of this, as of every other instinctive feeling to the production of good, and the preclusion of evil, is considered by some, as sufficient to account for its being implanted in our nature, without supposing it to be a presage of our future condition. As the pleasurable sensations accompanying health are powerful motives prompting us to preserve it, so the peace of mind, attendant on virtue, may be designed as an incitement to the cultivation of kind and benevolent affections—so also, as pain of body is wisely ordained to apprise us, that our frame has suffered injury, sti-

mulating us at the same time to apply a remedy, and furnishing a powerful admonition in future to avoid the cause; so the sentiment of self-reproach, and the painful feeling accompanying it, may be intended to teach us, that the heart is distempered, and to urge us to an immediate correction of the evil. This may possibly be the purpose, it is said, for which conscience, as an approving and condemning power, is implanted within us. It may be an instinctive feeling, subservient to the sanity of the soul, as the other conduces to the health and safety of the body. The argument, therefore, which is drawn from this faculty, in favour of a future retribution, has been considered by some as too doubtful to furnish any satisfactory evidence.

To this objection, however, it has been answered, that, though conscience may be intended by the wise and benevolent Author of our constitution, to serve, by its judicial awards, in our present state, to encourage to virtue, and deter from immorality, it is not hence to be inferred, as a necessary deduction, that this is the only purpose, which this internal monitor is designed to answer. We have, it is said, reason on the contrary to

conclude, that it has a higher and an ulterior object. For we find, that this faculty exercises her authority, when, on the hypothesis of eternal sleep, her approbation and her censure can prospectively be of no avail. Her authority is felt at the hour of death, when it cannot profit the dying, if they are to die for ever; and in cases too, where it cannot operate as a warning to survivors. If implanted solely as a monitor to apprise us when a distemper exists in the moral condition of the soul, and as an incentive to correct the evil, its admonitions at the hour of death would be fruitless, and so far this faculty would be given to us in vain. But there is no faculty, which the Deity has conferred, which exerts its energy when it can be productive of no good. Though a factitious power, or an artificial habit, may continue to exist, after the circumstances have ceased, in which it originated, there is no appetite or faculty given by nature, which continues beyond the period of its necessity, or its utility. If the pleasures and pains of conscience are a law in our constitution, and these awards accompany us to the last hour of our existence, when they can be no longer subservient to our moral improvement here, is there not

some reason for regarding them as presages of a state of enjoyment or suffering, into which death will introduce us? Is there not reason to think, that the delightful emotions, the pure and sublime pleasure accompanying a life of active virtue, as the association originates in the wisdom and goodness of Him who made us, will not be transitory gratifications, circumscribed within the space of human life, but are the foretastes of a still more sublime, and a never-ending felicity; while the compunctious visitations of an upbraiding conscience forewarn us, that, unless the moral corruption of the soul is cured, our sufferings will not terminate with our present existence?

This anticipation is strengthened by the consideration, to which we have already adverted, that, if the intention of Deity in implanting conscience within us be to fit us for that happiness, for which He designed us, by improving our pious affections, correcting every evil passion, and strengthening our virtuous habits, there is ground for presuming, that, if the purposes of its Author be not accomplished now, they will be perfected hereafter. This must be our conclusion, or we must believe, that the intention of the Deity in endowing us with

this faculty may be ultimately defeated. The latter alternative it would be an impeachment of the Divine perfections to admit.

SECTION V.

Hartley's Argument from Analogy.

SEVERAL arguments have been offered, in favour of a future state, drawn from certain analogies, as that between sleep and death, between the seasons of the year and the periods of human life, between the resuscitation of certain insects and plants in spring, after apparent death, and the possible resurrection of man. But as these analogies, though obvious and striking in minor particulars, confessedly fail in some most material points, we forbear from stating the arguments, which have been founded upon them. There is one argument, however, resting on this species of evidence, which possesses a strong claim to our most attentive consideration. It is adduced by Hartley, and may be stated thus:

The farther we carry our researches into the physical and the moral world, the stronger

becomes our conviction, that no pure evil exists. Amidst the numerous pains and sorrows, which we are doomed to bear, we have every reason to believe, that there is not one, which has not a tendency to improve our nature, and to make us wiser and better. The beneficial effect of adversity it would be easy to illustrate by a variety of examples. The great end of evil seems to be, under the ordination of Providence, to produce good. The means may be the occasion of inconvenience, of pain, or of sorrow; but the tendency is salutary, and the end generally beneficial. Apparent exceptions, doubtless, occur; but the general constitution of the system, in which we are placed, warrants the affirmation, that few, if any, direct or pure evils exist; and that every pain, every sorrow, every discord, and every irregularity, permitted under the Divine government, tend to the production of greater harmony, and higher good. It would be repugnant then to the general plan of the Divine administration to suppose, that the scene of human life should close with suffering. Such a conclusion is utterly irreconcileable with the established economy of our system, as manifestly exhibiting a subserviency of pain to

pleasure,—of evil to good. The dissolution of the body must be considered as an evil; it is more or less accompanied with suffering, corporeal or mental, and sometimes with both. Now, if it be a general law of our being, that we be subject to no evil, but what is calculated to produce good, is it probable, that death, which is the last evil, we must bear—an evil from which there is no escape—a catastrophe, both morally and physically painful and afflictive, will issue in no good, but prove to be a pure, gratuitous, and irremediable calamity? Is it not more probable, that, like all our other sufferings, it will conduce to our benefit, and, by a temporary suspension of our existence, if it is to be suspended, tend ultimately to improve it, and advance us to higher happiness? This supposition will reconcile it with the general plan of the Divine administration. But, that disorder and pain should conclude the scene, and that suffering should be inflicted without the possibility of producing good, is wholly irreconcileable with the manifest purposes of Deity, in the infliction of evil.

It has been urged, that death is not a pure evil—that it is, in many cases, a welcome release from pain and sorrow, and in all is ne-

cessary, as making room for a succession of other beings.

If death be a release from pain and sorrow, how are that pain and sorrow, which immediately precede death, and are productive of no advantage to the sufferer, to be reconciled with the general rule of the Divine administration, by which good is educed from evil? If the removal of one generation is necessary for the introduction of another, why is that removal accompanied with pain of body, and agony of mind? Why does not death, in every case, invade us, like sleep, stealing imperceptibly upon our senses, and softly lulling the powers of body and mind into a state of insensibility? Surely, it cannot be necessary to our removal from life's stage, that it should be accompanied with suffering. Death might put a period to our sorrows without the infliction of bodily pain. How then is this gratuitous infliction of suffering to be reconciled with the general economy of Providence, by which every evil is rendered subservient to the benefit of the sufferer? The brutes die, often indeed painfully, but with no distressing anticipation of the event—no regrets at parting with existence. Man, on the contrary, in imagination, dies often: and, when the hour

of dissolution comes, is subject not only to the pains of expiring nature, but also to the still more afflictive anguish, which the heart feels, when the most endearing ties are burst asunder. Why is man thus painfully distinguished from other animals? How is the sufferer benefited by this the last of all the evils, which he is doomed to undergo, if there be no future state? Is his sun to set for ever in a cloud? If experience teaches us, that it is a general law of the Divine government that every evil issue in good, we again ask, how can we reconcile it with this established law, that the last and often the most agonizing of all our sufferings shall oppress its victim without compensation, and without hope? Have we not reason rather to infer, from the general economy of physical and moral nature, as established by Deity, that this, like every other evil, will be rendered subservient to our advantage, and, instead of depriving us of existence, be the means of improving it? By adopting this hypothesis we reconcile the last evil, which we are here destined to bear, to the visible economy of Providence in the infliction of suffering. If we believe that the pains and sorrows of dissolution terminate in no good, death becomes an ano-

maly in the constitution of the system, and forms an unaccountable and capricious exception to the general ordinations of its Author.—But to the wisdom and goodness of Deity there can be no exception. Death, then, like every other evil, will administer to our benefit.

To this conclusion we must assent, or we must arraign the Divine government, as inconsistent with itself. Of the two alternatives, can the rational and pious mind doubt, which to prefer? Under the Omniscient eye of Unchangeable Benevolence, no evil can take place, not eventually beneficial to the sufferer himself.

SECTION VI.

Argument drawn from our love of life, and our horror of Annihilation.

THE Benevolent Author of nature seems to have endowed no sentient being with any appetite or desire, for the gratification of which He has not provided. This is a fact, for the truth of which we may appeal to the condition of every animal, in whatever grade of existence it may be placed. Man has na-

turally a dread of death; the love of life is implanted in him by his Maker. It is only when hope perishes, sorrow, pain, and despair overwhelming him, that he either voluntarily seeks death, or looks forward to its approach, without feelings of aversion, if not a sentiment of horror. Age, indeed, by blunting our sensibility to pleasure, and incapacitating us for vivid enjoyment, serves in some degree to reconcile us to the event; but even in the last stage of existence, when the senses are impaired, and only the shades of departed pleasures remain, we feel a gratification in the recollection of past enjoyments, and in living in the years, that are gone. All, to whom the idea of death has not become familiar, and their natural horror of it has not been conquered by its frequent anticipation, —all who have no apprehension that their future existence will be irredeemably wretched, recoil from the thought of annihilation, as a sad catastrophe, even though the event should be unaccompanied with pain. How few, at the present moment, would voluntarily abandon life for ever! Either present enjoyment, or the hope of future, which is enjoyment in anticipation, attaches us to existence. The fable of the old man and

Death presents a correct picture of our feelings, when the last foe of mortality stares us in the face. Fatigued with walking, and bending under his load, he became weary of life; and complaining of the evils of old age, poverty, and labour, invoked Death to come, and relieve him from his miseries; but no sooner did he behold him, than he startled at the sight, and shrunk with horror. This sentiment may be overpowered by the dread of a greater evil; but there is something in the thought of eternal extinction, from which the soul spontaneously recoils. A desire to live is the general law, the ruling principle; a wish to die, the rare exception.

So natural, indeed, is this desire of life, that we find even those, who have no hope of a futurity, yet ambitious to live in the memory of others, or in the records of history. "Non omnis moriar," said the poet, "magnaque pars mei Vitabit Libitinam." What does this shew, but that, unable to extinguish the desire, they are fain to change its object? Despairing of the reality, they please themselves with the idea. Parents feel an interest even in preserving their name; and in living in their posterity.

If this then be the natural, and, unless in extraordinary cases, the universal feeling, we ask, why is this desire implanted? Why does every man wish to prolong his existence? Why does he shrink from the thought of closing his eyes for ever, in darkness and insensibility? The life of every human being has its cares, its pains, its vexations, and its sorrows; but, notwithstanding these evils, whatever he may at particular moments feel, he wishes to live. No one will contend, that the desire of life is criminal; no one can deny, that it is at least innocent. If the wish were guilty, the argument would be of no avail.

Is it credible, then, that a Being of pure benevolence would create this desire only to be frustrated? Is this consistent with the attributes of veracity, of justice, and of goodness? Would man, with all his imperfections, unless unnaturally depraved, or under the temporary influence of some malignant passion, excite an ardent wish, which he had no intention to gratify, though he possessed the power? And can we offer such an indignity to the Divine character as to believe, that the Parent of all, that is great and good, would have inspired a desire of continued

existence, if that desire were only to delude us? Such a deception must be abhorrent to His nature. There is an absurdity in the thought, that benevolence can delight in mocking the wishes, which it has itself created. Either the desire is not natural, or not innocent; or it is implanted to be gratified. If the two former suppositions are false, the conclusion follows; we must either assent to it, or embrace the contradiction, that a Being of immaculate truth and justice can deceive us, or Benevolence excite a desire, which it purposes to disappoint.

To the force of this powerful argument, several objections have been opposed. These we shall now proceed to examine.

It has been urged, that the desire of immortality, or the perpetuation of our existence, is the result of early education *. This position, we apprehend, it would be difficult, if not impossible to prove. Can any unquestionable example be adduced, of a nation devoid of this desire? Has any experiment ever been made, by which it has been ascertained, that, without the influence of education, man would have no wish to continue his existence

* A Review of Rennel's Remarks on Scepticism by Do. Wylke Edwinsford.

beyond his present state, if that existence were to be accompanied with enjoyment? This is a wish, which it requires no education to inspire, and which no education can take away. It is a fact also, which militates conclusively against this objection, that, amidst all the varieties of moral culture, which have obtained, in different ages and nations of the world, the desire of a future existence has been found generally, if not universally, to prevail. We find it in the Tartar and the Indian, in the Negro and in the Laplander.

Again. It has been objected, that our love of life is a passion, which has been wisely implanted in us for our protection and safety; that, in its absence, the species would quickly perish; and that this desire, being merely a salutary provision, for the preservation of our being here, has no relation to a future state of existence. "The love of life," says an able metaphysician, "however generated, and independent on all connection with future existence, is a principle of great importance, and particularly as a preventative of suicide upon trivial occasions."*

* Belsham's Elements of Moral Philosophy.

He numbers it, therefore, among the inconclusive arguments in favour of immortality.

If it could be shewn, that this love of life is the only possible protection against an indifference to existence, and that, if this principle were wanting, life would be left with no sufficient safeguard, it must be acknowledged, that this objection to our argument, as accounting for the passion, would carry with it considerable weight. But if, on the contrary, it is certain, that this desire is not requisite to our preservation, and that life would have been adequately guarded by other means, it will follow, that the desire of continued existence must either be inspired in vain, not to say, for the purpose of delusion, or must be intended for gratification.

If we examine the constitution of the inferior animals, there exists in them, as far as we can discover, no attachment to life, arising from a sense of its value, or a consciousness of enjoyment; no deliberate wish to prolong their existence. They enjoy that portion of happiness, for which their capacities are adapted, and which their Maker has allotted to them; but they have no notion of death, as an extinction of their being, nor do they feel any desire to live hereafter. Yet

we find, that they are not left without that protection to life, which is necessary to its safety. They flee from an enemy, and shun whatever is noxious to health, or threatens them with danger. This is the impulse of instinct. Self preservation, however, is a law of their nature, as well as of ours. The difference is this: in them life is guarded by an instinctive principle; ours is additionally protected by a sentimental affection.

Now, if this innate principle suffice to secure the inferior animal against an indifference to danger, or death, unaccompanied, as it is, with that love of existence, which necessarily results from a consciousness of enjoyment, it is evident, that the simple instinct, which suffices for the protection of the brute creation, would have been sufficient also for the preservation of man. The objection, then, assumes a position, which we cannot concede.

We return therefore to the argument, and ask, if man be doomed to die like the animal in the common, and perish for ever, why is he not made like him? Why is he differently constituted? Why has he, superadded to the simple instinct, a love of existence founded in a sense of its value—a fear of

death, arising from the anticipation of pain, and of the termination of all his pleasures, combined as they are with all those delightful associations, which render the continuation of life desirable? Why is this distinction? Shall we impeach Infinite Wisdom by pronouncing the sentimental affection useless? And useless certainly it would be, if not intended for gratification; for, if nothing further had been designed than to guard our present existence, the simple instinct of the brute animal would have sufficiently answered that purpose. The desire then cannot be intended, as the objection would represent, solely for our immediate preservation; but must have been designed by the Author of our being, like every other natural desire, for its proper gratification. To inspire an ardent and fruitless affection is irreconcileable with the veracity and benevolence of the Deity.

Again; while the writer, to whom we have recently alluded, considers our desire of immortality to be wholly factitious, and resolvable into the influence of early education, the same intelligent metaphysician, whom we have now quoted, in examining the arguments on both sides of this question, adopts a similar view of the nature of this desire,

but refers it to a different cause. "The desire of life," says Mr. Belsham, "though very general, is not an instinctive principle, but is generated by the preponderance of pleasing associations, which lay a foundation for pleasing hopes, together with a strong apprehension, whether well or ill founded, of the pains of dissolution."*

It is a fact, which, we presume, will not be disputed, that every animal has so far a natural propensity, if not a desire, to preserve its life, that it instinctively avoids whatever would endanger it. Every man, we believe, is endowed with a similar instinctive principle, by which he is instantaneously prompted to avert death, without considering, at the moment, whether his attachment to life, be, or be not, founded, in correct views of its advantages, or its value. "We feel", said a late philosopher†, "a wish to live, without regard, at the moment of the wish, to the happiness, which might render existence desirable." This is wisely ordained by the Author of our being. If we were to wait, in the instant of imminent danger, to deliberate,

* Belsham's Elements of Moral Philosophy.

† Dr. Thomas Brown.

whether life were worth preserving, the evil might overtake us, before we had time to decide the question. There is beneficially, then, implanted within us an instinctive propensity to preserve life, and a dread of whatever would endager its safety.

But man has not only the instinct common to all animals, impelling him to flee from whatever would prove injurious or destructive, but he has likewise a desire of existence, necessarily accompanying a sense of its value. Whether this desire can be strictly considered to be instinctive, has become a question among metaphysicians. It is undéniable, that there are certain instincts, which display themselves, independently on all external exciting causes. There are others, which require the presence of the correlative object, either in imagination, or in reality. To call forth in the latter class any instinctive desire, is not, we apprehend, one and the same thing, as to generate that desire. The former implies simply the occasion; the latter the cause. Animals having no progeny feel no instinctive affection; it is excited by their young, but not generated, if by this term it be implied, that the feeling is factitious. Resentment is roused by a

sense of injury; gratitude is called forth by a sense of kindness; but the passions are instinctive. It may therefore be denied, that the desire of life is not to be deemed instinctive, though it be excited by the consciousness of enjoyment, and the hope of its continuance.

But, whatever opinion may be formed on this subject, the desire is undeniably natural; and, whether it be an original principle, or only its necessary result, our argument remains unshaken.

Whatever habit, disposition, or desire is generated by education, and is either present, or absent, according to the mode, in which that education is conducted, must be considered to be factitious. But, if it result from our constitution, as definitely and necessarily affected by the economy of the system, in which we are placed, and is not dependent on contingent modes of education, it must, we conceive, be regarded as natural. Now, whether my desire of continued existence be an original affection, or necessarily spring from association, or any other innate principle, it must, on either supposition, be considered to be the ordination and design of my Creator. If He has so

framed my mind, that the pleasures, which I enjoy, and those, which I hope, are, by the necessity of my mental constitution, associated with a desire to have my existence continued, then, if I believe, that He is the Author of my enjoyment, and of the original principle, I must believe, that He is the Author of the desire also, which necessarily springs from them. The latter is as much a law of my nature, as the causes, in which it necessarily originates. And, though like every other desire or appetite, it may be occasionally repressed, or subdued, it may be justly affirmed to be inherent, and universal.

We proceed to the consideration of another objection, which is briefly presented by an advocate of materialism, in the following question. After observing, that the desire of immortality is the effect of education, and furnishes therefore "no argument for its attainment," he asks, "would the miser's desire of wealth constitute a means of his acquiring a princely estate?" He adds, "it might generate efforts, but could not render the attainment of the object a matter of certainty."

A question less pertinent, or an observation more irrelevant, can scarcely be ima-

gined. The intelligent reader must perceive, that the author has strangely misconceived the argument, and proposes a query, which, though answered in the negative, as he presumes, would not, in the most remote degree, affect our conclusion. If we maintained, that our desire of immortality contributed aught to its attainment, the question might claim at least the merit of relevancy, whatever judgment might be formed, respecting its validity. But by whom, or where, has such an argument been offered? Has it ever been asserted, or does our reasoning imply, that, in order to secure a future existence, we have only to desire it, and that our wish to possess will be the means of attaining it? This indeed would be a ridiculous absurdity; but it is not ours, though the author, by an extraordinary misconception of the argument, and a singular confusion of things obviously distinct, has imputed it to us. Has he not discernment sufficient to distinguish between the means of acquiring and the ground of expectation? The distinction is too evident, to require any illustration.

An objection, somewhat similar, but certainly not chargeable with so palpable an

error, has been urged by the able metaphysician, whom I have recently cited *. "The desire of life," says the author, "however universal and predominant, no more proves, that man will be immortal, than the desire of health, ease, and opulence proves, that he will be rich, or free from disease and pain."

To this objection the author should receive it as a sufficient reply, that he himself, in express contradiction to it, numbers "the capacity of forming expectations of a state of existence after death, of being strongly impressed with these expectations, of *desiring*, or fearing, a future state, and of regulating his conduct by a habitual regard to it," among the probable arguments in favour of a futurity †. By what ingenuity these observations can be reconciled, I frankly own my inability to comprehend. How can the desire of life, which is but the desire of futurity, be at once an argument, and yet no argument, for another state of existence? But let us examine the objection, and dismiss the inconsistency, with which, in our apprehension, the author is chargeable.

The author reasons from three subjects to

* Belsham's Elements of Moral Philosophy, p. 348.

† Ib. p. 356.

a fourth, on the ground of analogy; but they do not appear to us to have that resemblance, which is sufficient to justify his conclusion. The desire of opulence is not universal; it is factitious, and not natural. In the rude and simple condition of man, this wish is not known. It is only in his artificial state, that he seeks wealth; and even then the desire of opulence does not universally obtain. "Give me neither poverty, nor riches; but feed me with food convenient for me," is a rational, and not a singular, prayer. The desire of existence is on the contrary, natural and universal. In every age, and in every nation, the deprivation of life is deprecated, as an evil, and inflicted, as a punishment. Be it observed also, that all cannot be rich; universal wealth is an absurdity; but all may live hereafter.

If by the term *ease* be meant exemption from all occupation corporeal and intellectual, the universality of the desire is denied; nor is it natural to man. A life of inaction and languor, where climate does not enervate the whole frame, is incompatible with happiness. If it mean rest after labour, nature seems to have provided for it by the periodical return of darkness, and the

quietude of repose. If it mean tranquillity of mind, or freedom from solicitude and trouble, the universality of the desire may be justly questioned. There are restless spirits, who delight in the perturbations of passion, and to whom calm placidity would be insufferably wearisome. The human mind is so constituted, that some degree of agitation is necessary to enjoyment; nor has he ever known the value of ease, whose nerves have never been strung with toil. But, if the desire were confessedly natural and universal, its gratification, in all cases, is inconsistent with that improvement in knowledge, piety, and virtue, which is man's highest happiness. This constitutes an important distinction between it and the desire of immortality.

The desire of health is both natural and universal: and here between the objects compared, considered in themselves, there exists a close analogy. But this desire is evidently designed for gratification. There is nothing in the structure of the human frame, which indicates, that it should be necessarily subject to disorder. And, if a provision is made in our corporeal constitution, favourable to the desire of health, the analogy, as far as it

holds, serves rather to support, than to oppose, our conclusion.

But there is one general answer, which seems sufficient to obviate the objection. It is this. The gratification of any desire, even though natural, may in certain cases be detrimental to our real interest, and injurious to others; the Deity, therefore, in His wisdom, may "see fit" to deny it: but the desire of a happy immortality, in more immediate communion with our Maker, gifted, as we hope to be, with purer affections, enlarged capacities, and higher sources of enjoyment, is of all our aspirations the most noble, and the most rational. Its gratification, while it dignifies our nature, can neither weaken our piety, nor endanger our virtue. It is, on the contrary, the perfection of our being, and the ultimate end, to which every other gratification is intended to be subservient.

If the author can shew, that the wishes, which he specifies, of an immediate good, are equally natural, equally universal, equally salutary, as being equally conducive to our real happiness, and that their gratification would, in every instance, be equally consistent with Divine wisdom and benevolence,

as the desire of immortality, and its gratification, we shall then acknowledge his argument sound, and his conclusion just. But, until it be proved that the cases are analogous, and that, what is true of one must be true of all, and while we have reasons for believing that they are not parallel, we must reject the argument as fallacious.

We proceed to examine another objection. "If life," says a late learned professor, "be pleasing—and even, though there were no existence beyond the grave, life might still, by the benevolence of Him, who conferred it, have been rendered a source of pleasure,—it is not wonderful, that we should desire futurity, since futurity is only protracted life. . . . . The universal desire then, even if the desire were truly universal, would prove nothing, but the goodness of Him, who has made the realities, or, if not the realities, the hopes of life so pleasing, that the mere loss of what is possessed, or hoped, appears like a positive evil of the most afflictive kind." *

When the author acknowledges, though the concession be employed in opposition to

our argument, that there is nothing wonderful in man's desire of life, as accompanied with happiness, he seems to admit, that the wish is natural. But he represents this desire as proving nothing more, than the benevolence of its Great Author. If this judgment were correct, our argument would be invalidated: but no truth can be clearer to us, than that the opinion of the learned author is founded in error. It attributes to the effect, what is ascribable to the cause. It is not the desire of life, which evinces the goodness of the Deity; but the enjoyment and the hope, with which He has been pleased to associate our existence. His benevolence is amply manifested by the happiness of the brute creation; they have their appetites, and their gratifications, yet they have no love of life, no desire to continue their being. Our happiness would evince the same attribute in the Creator, if we had no desire to prolong our existence; for the feeling of enjoyment, and the desire of life, are by no means necessarily connected. This is evinced by the constitution of the animal creation; and the author himself admits, that they are not inseparably related.

If then it is by the communication of hap-

piness, and by this only, and not the desire of life, by which the benevolence of the Deity is manifested; and if it must be admitted, that the enjoyment of happiness might exist, without the desire of its continuation, it follows, that the author's position is erroneous, and that the desire of life, as associated with enjoyment, proves something more than the goodness of the Giver. On the contrary supposition, its existence would be unaccountable. Why was the desire implanted? Is it necessary to the preservation of life? No, certainly. The animal instinct would have sufficed for that purpose. Is it necessary to enhance enjoyment? If it has not a contrary tendency, it is clear, that, if the desire of immortality or a continued existence, were absent, our immediate pleasures would be the same. Is the desire of life, in every sentient being, inseparable from enjoyment? This is not the fact; the brute creation furnish evidence, that life may be a source of pleasure, where there is no sense of its value, no love of existence, no desire of its perpetuation. Is it necessary to evince the goodness of the Giver? No.—That is manifested by His boundless beneficence.

Why then is the desire inspired? Why is man so constituted, that this wish is natural to him, and not to the inferior animals? Why is this distinction? The desire undeniably exists; and, whether it be strictly instinctive, or only the necessary accompaniment of some original and inherent principle, it is, on either supposition, designed by his Maker, and must exist for some purpose. If no immediate end be answered by it, we must conclude, that it has an ulterior object, —that it points to a destiny, which the mere sense of happiness, without this desire, could never have led us to anticipate, and that it is intended for gratification. On every other supposition it is unaccountable.

The author remarks, "that it is not wonderful, that we should desire futurity;" but it would be wonderful, it would be incredible, that this feeling should be peculiar to man, and implanted in his nature by a Wise and Good Being, with no utility, and no design, unless for the purpose of disappointment. Will the author maintain, that a desire, which he acknowledges to be natural, and seems as inseparable from our constitution as the love of happiness, if given only for delusion, can

prove the goodness of the Giver? Is deception an evidence of benevolence?

It has not, we presume, escaped the attention of the reader, that the learned author questions the universality of this desire. The belief of immortality, it must be acknowledged, is not universal, though the exceptions are in number comparatively insignificant; but we may confidently affirm, that there never was a human being, who felt indifferent to existence, if that existence were accompanied with happiness, either in possession, or in hope.

We should now dismiss the objection; but there is one remark, offered by the author, to which, though not materially affecting the argument, we deem it necessary to advert. He observes, that "the realities, or, if not the realities, the hopes of life, may be so pleasing, that the mere loss of what is possessed, or hoped, *appears* like a positive evil, of the most afflictive kind." Do we misunderstand the philosopher? Or is it possible, that he can mean, that the deprivation of enjoyment is only a seeming, and not a real evil? If a man has by misfortunes, in the creation of which he had no share, been reduced from affluence to penury, or, if he has been visited with sickness, or, what is

still more distressful, if he has just returned from performing the last sad office to an affectionate relative, or beloved friend, would it not be an insult to his feelings to tell the sufferer, that his loss was not a real, but a seeming, evil? that his calamity, whatever it might *appear* to him, was merely negative, and not of a positive kind? This, surely, would not be the language of either reason, or religion,—certainly not the cheering voice of sympathy, nor the balm of soothing consolation. A stoical philosophy may teach, and its professors affect to believe, that the deprivation of enjoyment is not an evil; but human feeling spurns the absurdity.

The preceding observations, it is hoped, will suffice to shew, that the author's objection originates in error; and that, while the preponderance of enjoyment, in the whole animal creation, evinces the goodness of Deity, the desire of life, peculiar to man, and not necessarily connected with this preponderance, demonstrates something besides His benevolence—something, without which the desire itself would be reconcileable with neither His wisdom, nor His goodness.

It is further objected, that our notion of immortality is the effect of our provident and

rational nature. It is alleged also, that our desire of a future existence is the necessary offspring of self-love; but that, if from this notion, and this desire, we proceed to belief, it is not the Deity, who deludes us, but we, who deceive ourselves, believing merely because we wish to believe.

To the second of these objections it is a sufficient answer to observe, that every appetite in our nature is selfish, but is, notwithstanding, furnished with the means of gratification. This argument, therefore, has no validity.

If, by the first objection, it be intended to affirm, that man could not have been formed with a provident nature, and endowed with reason, yet with no notion of a future existence, we do not hesitate to dispute the solidity of the ground, on which the objection rests. We perceive no inconsistency in believing, that man might have been endowed with foresight adequate to the supply of all his animal necessities, and with a rational faculty, by which he might acquire knowledge in art and science, yet possessing no idea, and therefore no desire, of immortality. And, if such a constitution would involve no contradiction, it follows, that to

impart it, is possible to Omnipotence; and that the notion and the desire of a future existence are not necessarily or essentially connected with intellectual power and that foresight, which might be necessary for ministering to our corporeal wants.

But let it be granted, though the concession be scarcely pardonable, that it was impossible for Omnipotence to create a being, possessed of man's mental endowments, yet devoid of all desire of a future existence. Reasoning from the attributes of Deity, as displayed in the universe, and as demonstrated by reason, what procedure should we anticipate, that consummate intelligence and goodness would, on this supposition, adopt? We appeal to the objector. Would an infinitely wise, just, and benevolent Being give existence to a race of creatures, and endow them with faculties, which He knew would necessarily generate a desire, the most ardent, and the most exalted, yet never to be gratified? Would He practise a delusion, that He might make man a rational being? If Omnipotence could be supposed incapable of accomplishing, what consummate wisdom, and boundless goodness would dictate, is it credible, does not

even human truth and human feeling oppose the belief, that the Great Author of all that is right and true, would resort to a deception, and inspire, whether directly, or indirectly, it matters not, a wish, which He was aware, could never be realized; rather than man should not be endowed with a provident nature? From a conception, not only degrading to the Divine Being, but involving a contradiction to His attributes, every rational and pious mind instantaneously recoils. Truth is the noblest of all virtues; falsehood and deceit the basest of all vices. No appetite, no affection, no desire is implanted in vain. Each has its gratification. "Nature", says a distinguished metaphysician somewhat quaintly, "never gravitates towards nothing." *

With one observation more we conclude our reply to the preceding objection. It is an error to suppose, that belief is dependent on the will. We may indeed feel a desire to believe some tenet to be true, because it is accordant with our hopes and wishes; and we may be disposed, therefore, to exclude all opponent evidence from our considera-

* Dr. James Hutton.

tion; but our belief, whether well or ill founded, must have argument for its basis. We cannot believe, because we wish to believe. Whether the ground of our conviction be weak or strong, is a fit matter of discussion; but, while we appeal to reason and facts, opposing argument to argument, it cannot be justly imputed to us, that we believe for no better reason, than that we wish to believe.

SECTION VII.

Arguments from the Hope of Immortality, the general Belief in a Future Existence, and the pious and social Affections of our nature.

WITH the desire of immortality we find not only the hope, but also the belief, very generally associated. Whatever may have been the diversities of moral and intellectual culture, whatever dissimilitudes have existed, or may exist, in the usages, the laws, or the physical and moral circumstances of different nations, we find, in every stage of man's advancement from the rudeness of barbarism to the highest state of civilization and science, the hope or the belief of a future existence prevailing with few, or no, excep-

tions. Whence, then, did this hope, or this belief, originate? If from any revelation, then our conclusion becomes unquestionable. If from the desire simply, this, at least, proves, that the desire is a natural affection; whence its gratification becomes a probable conclusion. If from reflection and reason, it follows from the general prevalence of the hope, or the belief, notwithstanding all diversities of education, that this is a doctrine, which, our common feelings, and common understandings, universally approve. Its very general reception furnishes indeed some presumption, that the reasons, by which the belief is supported, are rational and just. "Quod, si omnium consensus naturæ vox est, omnesque, qui ubique sunt, consentiunt esse aliquid, quod ad eos pertineat, qui e vita cesserunt, nobis quoque idem existimandum est: et, si quorum aut ingenio, aut virtute animus excellit, eos arbitramur, quia natura optima sint, cernere naturæ vim maximè, verisimile est, cum optimus quisque virtuti serviat, esse aliquid, cujus is post mortem sensum sit habiturus."*

It seems impossible, indeed, to assign any

* Cic. Tusc. Quæst. lib. i.

satisfactory reason, why the very idea of a future existence should be given to us at all, unless on the supposition, that the hope of immortality is to be realized. If the present state is to be the whole of our being, why are not our conceptions confined to the sphere, to which our existence is limited? Why are we capable, in imagination and in hope, of rising beyond that sphere? Why have we a notion of eternity? The brutes have no such conception. Why is it given to man? It appears utterly impossible to account for this distinction, unless on the hypothesis of another state of being. The idea, on every other supposition, is not only useless, but delusive. If our Maker had not destined us for immortality, His wisdom, His justice, and His benevolence furnish unquestionable ground to believe, that He would have withheld the idea of any condition beyond that, in which we were placed.

It is vain to urge, that the hope of immortality arises from the nature of the affection itself, and proves nothing; for that this principle might be kindly given to us, as necessary to our present state, stimulating our activity, and sustaining us under suffering, if there were no future existence.

"Though nothing", says Dr. Thos. Brown, "were to exist beyond the grave, hope, in all its variety of objects, would still be useful, for animating to continued, though varied, exertion; and as thus beneficial to the successive races of mortals, would have been even then a gift, not unworthy of Divine benevolence."

The utility of hope, and the pleasure, which accompanies this emotion, are too evident to be disputed. But, if this affection was designed by the Deity to stimulate our industry, and to mitigate our sufferings, evincing the goodness of Him, who inspired it, why is not that hope confined to the present state? Why does it range beyond the limits of mortality? Why does it extend to a life beyond the grave? Why does it live in our bosoms, when the spark of vitality is almost extinct? If it could be proved, or if we had the slightest reason to believe, that the emotion of hope, if it exist at all, must, in its very nature, extend its views to objects beyond the present scene, the objection might have some foundation. And even then, it would be irreconcileable with the wisdom, justice, and benevolence of the Divine Being to inspire an affection, subject to numberless

disappointments in this life, and certainly fallacious in respect to its views in another state. This observation derives peculiar force from the consideration, that it is the hope of another and better world, where "every tear shall be wiped from every eye, and sorrow and sighing shall be known no more," that sustains the soul of every good man under the pressure of calamity.

But the supposition here offered is not justified by fact. Many of the inferior creation possess this principle of hope to a certain degree, in common with us. In them it is confined within the sphere of their immediate existence. It never exceeds their wants, and their provided gratifications. Why not so in man? We might have indulged the expectation of an absent good, so as to excite our efforts to obtain it, with no notion, no hope, of a futurity. Why then does this affection in us soar above the bounds of this sublunary state, if not to be gratified with the fruition of its object? If we are to perish with the brute creation, with one common fate, why are not our hopes and fears, like theirs, circumscribed within the limits of our present existence? Nay, as we know, that every passion and appetite ceases

to exist, when it has answered its end, it may be pertinently asked, why does this hope live, when it can answer no purpose, and when every worldly object is vanishing from our sight? If this hope be intended to become a reality, these facts may be explained, in consistency with the attributes of the Divine Being; but on every other supposition are wholly inexplicable. To imagine that this hope is a mere delusion, practised on man, from which the lower creation are exempted, is a notion, which every rational Theist must reject, as irreconcileable with the known attributes of the Deity.

Again.—The pious and social affections of our nature seem to lead to the same conclusion. No reflecting mind can contemplate the works of the Almighty, as extending through the regions of immeasurable space, without being impressed with the most profound reverence of His omnipotent power. Nor can we regard that Providence, which provides for the wants of the little insect, and at the same time guides the surrounding orbs in the trackless heaven, without feeling a conviction of His infinite wisdom, and ineffable goodness. And when we reflect, that every breath we draw is His; that in Him we live, and

move, and have our being; that all our public blessings, domestic comforts, and individual enjoyments are the gifts of His munificent, though invisible, hand; our gratitude to our Preserver, and unwearied Benefactor, is naturally awakened. Reverence, devotion, and love, with a profound submission of his weak reason to His infinite wisdom, are predominant feelings in the bosom of every man, who meditates on the adorable attributes of his Maker. To commune with the Great Parent of the universe is one of the most sublime and enrapturing gratifications, of which the human soul is susceptible. Is it then to be believed, that these pious emotions, which are the inspiration of the Being, who made us, and are irresistibly excited by the contemplation of His works—emotions, which constitute man's highest happiness, and the supreme dignity of his nature, elevating him above every low and grovelling passion, fitting him for a more intimate communion with his Creator, and associated with the desire to love Him with a purer heart, and serve Him with a more willing mind,—are to be buried by death in everlasting annihilation? Are we formed to revere His power, to admire His wisdom, to adore His goodness, and to indulge in these

pious affections with increasing delight, through an eternity of ages—are we formed thus, and is the flame of devotion kindled within us for no other purpose, than to be extinguished in endless darkness and insensibility? Is this reconcileable with the character of a Being, who cannot act in folly, and can do nothing in vain? Have we not rather reason to believe, that to inspire a grateful, but only momentary, affection for an eternal object, is consistent with neither the wisdom, nor the goodness of the Deity, and that our pious sensibilities are not given to perish for ever with the dissolution of the body?

We are also endowed with certain sympathetic and social affections, which attach us one to another by the closest and most powerful ties. If these never survived their objects, but expired when *they* ceased to exist, we might naturally conclude, that they were implanted in our nature, for only a temporary end. But, when the object of our affections is torn from us by death, and when nothing is left but the melancholy recollection of common endearments, and mutual sympathies, now no more, still, still we cherish a fond affection for the memory of those, whom we once loved. Though *they* are dead,

the feeling lives. Why do we weep over the grave of an affectionate relative, after he has long mingled with his native dust? Why does the sigh heave in a parent's bosom, when some little relic reminds him of his long lost child? Why does the tear of sorrow start from the eye, when busy memory recals the pleasures, which we were wont to share with a departed friend? Why do we ardently desire to be reunited to those, who were dear to our hearts, and from whom no power but death could part us? If these sympathetic affections had no other purpose than to bind our souls in mutual love and attachment here, and to conduce only to present enjoyment, why do they last beyond the period of their utility? Why do they outlive the objects of their regard, and accompany us even to the last departing sigh? There is no contradiction, or even improbability, in the notion, that they might exist as a reciprocal bond of love or endearment, and cease to be, after the objects are withdrawn. Why is it not so, if they were intended only for a temporary purpose? Does not the infinite wisdom of the Creator, who does nothing in vain, give us reason to hope, that, if the affection continue, when its object is removed from the

present scene, its gratification is only suspended for a little, and will be hereafter renewed, never more subject to interruption, in another and higher state of existence; when brother shall be reunited to brother, and friend to friend, in bonds of ceaseless harmony and love?

SECTION VIII.

Argument from the Inadequacy of the present state to our capacities of enjoyment.

THE insufficiency of the present state to yield that happiness, of which we are capable, and to which we aspire, must, to every considerate mind, present itself, as a cogent argument in favour of a futurity.

The vanity of human life has been, in all ages and in all countries, the subject of complaint, and a theme of declamation. The philosopher has endeavoured to mitigate the evil, while the poet has exerted his powers in depicting it in vivid colours. There is indeed no truth more generally acknowledged, than that the present state is unsatisfactory. Amidst all the pleasures furnished by sense, amidst the gratifications of appetite, the

delights of knowledge, and the sublimer joys of piety and virtue, the soul grasps at something greater—something more suited to its capacities and desires.

Now, in the physical world, we behold every thing adapted to every thing, in just measure and degree. Causes are admirably adjusted to effects. The powers of the agent wonderfully agree with the susceptibilities of the patient. Congruity of relation is everywhere visible. If any irregularity or anomaly present itself, we find it to be only occasional and temporary. We have ample evidence to convince us, that it is not intended to be general, or permanent.

We find the same admirable adjustment in the animal creation. Every organ is fitted for its function; every appetite has its gratification. No animal inferior to man is endowed with a single desire, for the satisfaction of which its beneficent Creator has not provided. Every capacity is filled; no "void is left aching in the heart." The ox grazes in the common, the bird flies through the air, the fish swims through the sea, and the insect wantons in the sunny ray, satisfied and happy. Their enjoyments are adapted to their desires; all are fitted to their several spheres;

no inferior tribe envies another for its superior enjoyments, or is discontented with its condition; for none has any conception of a nature higher than its own.—They have no notion of a Creative power, or a protecting Providence, no idea of a futurity—no hope, no wish to live hereafter. In short, so admirably adapted are their capacities and enjoyments, their appetites and gratifications, that they have no desire for anything beyond what nature has supplied. And, what is of supreme importance to real enjoyment, they can indulge in the pleasures of the present hour, without the painful anticipation of the moment, which shall consign them to the insensibility of their parent earth. . . .

Compare theirs with the condition of man. His conceptions and desires are not limited to the state, in which he is placed. He refers his existence to a Divine Original—his preservation to an Omniscient Providence. He delights to contemplate the works of God, and longs for a more intimate communion with the Author of his existence. He feels desires, and is conscious of aspirations, which no created object can satisfy. He feels, that his present state is not commensurate to his wishes—those very wishes, which

his Creator has inspired; while his enjoyments are alloyed with the painful anticipation of the hour, which may doom him for ever to darkness and oblivion. Why is he capable of knowing something of the attributes of his Maker, if that knowledge is to be cut short in its commencement, and to terminate in nothing? Why has he desires, the noblest he can entertain, never to be gratified? hopes the most pure and the most sublime that he can indulge, never to be realized? Why is he the only being not satisfied with his lot; the only being that feels the vanity of his condition; the only being that aspires to a larger knowledge, and a higher happiness, than earth can yield? Is man a blot in the universe of God? Is he an anomaly in the works of his Maker's power? Is *he*, whom his Almighty Parent has placed at the head of this lower creation, the only being, whom He has made susceptible of higher happiness, than He has been pleased to confer—the only creature, whose capacities and gratifications are not mutually adjusted? If such be his present condition, it cannot be intended as his ultimate destination. If the Deity had designed this world to be the only state of our existence,

we have in His wisdom and goodness, as well as in the condition of every animal but man, a sufficient ground of assurance, that He would have suited our desires to the enjoyments provided for us; and, though in a higher scale of being than the brute creation, we should, like them, have rested satisfied with our state, without a wish or a conception of purer or more permanent happiness, either here, or hereafter. If He has placed us, then, in a world, where the objects are inadequate to our capacities of enjoyment, we must conclude either that consummate wisdom has acted in folly, that perfect benevolence can create dissatisfaction, and that man is a blot in God's creation; or we must infer, that our susceptibilities of higher happiness are not given us in vain, and that, if the soul of man aspires to something more satisfactory, something more adequate to its conceptions, than the present life can yield, another and better state awaits it.

If we consider the mutual adaptation of capacities and enjoyments in the brute creation, and regard this only, their condition would induce the belief, that the present life is the whole of their being. They have no idea, no hope, no desire of another existence.

They neither feel by reflection the memory of the past, nor by distant foresight the terrors of the future. These constitute important distinctions between them and man, and furnish a strong argument for believing, that we and they are not destined to one common fate. But, what the designs of Infinite Wisdom may be, respecting the inferior creation, whether they are, or are not, intended for purposes beyond those of their present existence, we know not. The scheme of Providence necessarily surpasses our comprehension. In the Divine attributes, we have a sufficient security, that all is ordered, in perfect accordance with unerring wisdom, and unchangeable goodness. In the counsels of Deity, therefore, it is our duty, as it is to every pious man, his delight, to repose with humble and unlimited confidence. We know, on the one hand, that many of the inferior creation are subjected to sufferings, though not in the same degree, in common with us. This community of evil, as far as it extends, favours the hope, that the present is not their only destination. We know, on the other hand, that man is peculiarly distinguished from them, by a conception, a desire, a hope of futurity, by a susceptibility

of religious and moral culture, and by a manifest inadequacy of his gratifications to his capacities. If *they* are in death to perish for ever, these distinctions lead us to draw a different conclusion respecting ourselves: if *they* have an ulterior destination, *a fortiori* another state likewise awaits man.

SECTION IX.

Arguments drawn from Premature Mortality, and the secondary nature of the animal system.

AGAIN, man comes into the world helpless, and ignorant. For preservation and instruction he is immediately dependent on the compassion and care of others. His boyhood is spent partly in plays and pastimes—partly, also, in imbibing the elements of useful knowledge, communicated by teachers, or acquired by experience. In youth, passion and appetite hold an ascendancy, and the pleasures of sense are the general objects of his pursuit. These, with the allurements of riches and honours, divide his affections in manhood. Time and experience convince him, that however captivating may be the attractions of the world, when

viewed in prospect, the enjoyment too often disappoints his hopes. He feels, that they are in their nature fleeting, and unsubstantial; while every day impresses the conviction, that they are held by a very uncertain and precarious tenure. As years advance, the importunity of appetite abates, and the ardour of passion is cooled. Reason assumes her sway, and he then learns, that knowledge, virtue, and piety are the only sources of real enjoyment, and constitute the only ground of solid and permanent happiness. Thus is a large portion of life spent, before man learns how to live.

Is it then reconcileable with the character of a wise and benevolent parent, that, after we have purchased by much labour and many disappointments, the wisdom necessary to direct our conduct—*after* we have been taught, by the experience of years, what is man's highest good, and where to look for substantial enjoyment over which the world has no power,—after, in short, we have learned how to live, is it, we ask, reconcileable with the wisdom and goodness of the Great Author of our being, that we should be doomed then to eternal annihilation? Would a human parent, not dead to the common feelings of our na-

ture, treat his offspring thus? If the wisdom thus acquired is to have no scope for exercise here—if the attainment of useful knowledge and virtuous habits is to be buried with us, often prematurely in everlasting death, we should have reason to arraign the wisdom and goodness of that Being, who should render that knowledge, and those habits, acquired by patient assiduity, and the mortifications of self-denial, fruitless and unavailing. Is it not more consistent with reason to conclude, that if death arrests us here at the moment, when we are best prepared to live, and when, profiting by the lessons taught by experience and reflection, we have learned to place our chief happiness, where only it can rest, in devotion to God, and beneficence to man—is it not more consistent with reason to conclude, that these salutary lessons will not be for ever lost, and, though of no avail here, will promote our happiness hereafter? This, and no other, supposition can reconcile our condition with the wisdom and benevolence of the Great Parent of the universe.

In connexion with this argument, it has been urged, that man contains within himself two distinct systems, one merely animal and sensual, the other intellectual, and moral. The

former is merely a secondary constitution, and evidently designed to be instrumental to the perfection of the other. By the organs of sense, we acquire the elements of knowledge. By the instinctive appetites of nature the species is preserved and continued; and while a provision is made for this purpose in our animal economy, it is ordained, at the same time, that we be stimulated to obey their impulse by the pleasure, which the Author of our being has annexed to this obedience. But that these senses, these instincts, and these pleasures are all intended solely for this end, is obvious: for, when the organ of sense has answered its purpose, it decays; when the instinct has accomplished its end, it either ceases for a time, or it perishes; and when we exceed by indulgence the limits prescribed by our Maker, and lose sight of the purpose, for which the appetite is given, disease and pain generally ensue. The obvious and principal design, therefore, of the animal economy is to preserve the individual, and to continue the species.

The question then occurs, for what end is this preservation ordained? What is the purpose of life? Is it the gratifications of sense, or the indulgence of appetite? The

constitution of our nature clearly shews, that these are only secondary purposes. No rational being, who has ever experienced the difference between animal pleasure and intellectual or moral enjoyment, will doubt for a moment, that the great end of man's being, and his highest good, is first the acquisition of knowledge, and next the culture of virtuous and pious affections. These constitute the chief happiness of our nature. Now, is it probable, that the moral and intellectual system, which forms the most important part of our constitution, and to whose improvement the animal economy is only secondary and subservient, will perish for ever, because the sensual system ceases to exist? Is the end defeated, or the object lost, because the means, by which it has been effected, being no longer necessary, have ceased to be?

If, again, the intellectual and moral system have no ulterior purpose beyond the present state, if it be to end in nothing, then our mental constitution, capable as it might be of admiring with reverence and delight the works of God, through an eternity of ages, has been made in vain. But wisdom cannot act in folly. The organs, when they have answered the end, for which they were

given, may perish, the animal frame, having executed its office, in subserviency to the purposes of intellectual and moral life, may be dissolved, but the soul formed for knowledge, virtue, and piety, no longer dependent on the animal economy, and capable of progressing by its own powers, will live, and not die.

Again—it is the characteristic of wisdom to do nothing in vain; and the farther we carry our researches into nature, the more we are convinced, that every thing has its use, and has been formed for a certain end. This is a conclusion, which, notwithstanding a few exceptions, as our ignorance may conceive them, our advancement in knowledge serves daily to confirm. If it be an evidence, then, of intelligence to do nothing in vain, to produce for no end must be an argument of folly, and to make only to unmake is practical absurdity. Now, how many thousands of human beings are born every hour, who expire as soon as they have beheld the light? What useful end does this mortality answer? If its moral effects are urged, in order to reconcile it with the Divine wisdom, the argument is vain, unless on the supposition of a future state. If we dis-

miss from consideration its moral tendency, we ask again, what beneficial purpose does such an ordination serve? Why was a human being formed to breathe, only to die? Was an organization, whether perfect or imperfect, prepared for no useful purpose? And no useful purpose can it answer, as far as we can perceive, if birth is to be instantly followed by nothing, but everlasting death. Can we examine with attention the complexity of the means provided for its generation, for its sustentation as a *fœtus*, for its exclusion at birth, for its nourishment afterwards, for the development of its mental powers, and believe, that all this had no other end, than to produce a mere abortion? Such a notion is irreconcileable with the counsels of consummate wisdom? Does not the machinist, who constructs a complicated engine, and wantonly destroys it, justly incur the charge of inconsideration and caprice? Whence is that intelligence derived, by which we perceive his folly? And can the Author of that intelligence be less wise, than we? Can He act in error? Can His wisdom fail, where human prudence would judge aright? Is the creature superior to the Creator? The notion is absurd.

It is true, that some animals are generated, destined to live only for a few hours, whose structure is curiously and wonderfully framed; but it is to be observed, that these, by arriving at a state of maturity, accomplish the purpose of their being. The infant man, born with all the organic apparatus, necessary to physical and moral improvement, and the continuation of his species, is often cut off in the first hour of his existence, and one half perish before they reach the age of maturity. What may be the counsels of Eternal Wisdom respecting creatures, thus perishing at birth, or before they become rational and moral agents, the light of nature furnishes no information; and on no other ground are we here permitted to reason. But it would be an impeachment of the Divine perfections to believe, either that the intentions of the Deity are frustrated by such productions, or that He would employ a complexity of means to accomplish nothing but mere abortions. And here I would crave the permission of the reader to offer one general observation.

However strange and irrational it may appear, it is certainly a fact, that in contemplating defects and evils, as they seem

to us, in the works of nature, and in human arrangements, we betray a strong propensity to place more confidence in the sagacity and virtue of man, than in the wisdom and benevolence of the supreme Being. Yet it is clear, that whatever may be our mode of reasoning, or our principle of belief in the former case, we must, if we act consistently, *a fortiori* adopt the same mode of reasoning, and the same principle of belief in the latter also. Now, let it be supposed, that I have been acquainted with a friend for many years; that I have long experienced his intelligenee, his prudence, his beneficence; that I have observed all his counsels and designs to have been uniformly laid in discretion and wisdom; that I have seen circumstances under his direction, issuing in good, from which I rashly anticipated nothing but calamity; and that on numberless occasions, I have known him educe incalculable benefit from inconsiderable injury. One or two cases occur, in which I cannot reconcile the conduct of my friend, with his wonted discretion. His procedure appears to me wholly unaccountable; it is immediately injurious, and seems likely to terminate in irremediable evil. Do

I therefore rashly condemn my friend? Do I hastily conclude that he has acted in folly? Does his conduct, unaccountable as it may be in these instances, annul my conviction of his pre-eminent wisdom, or cancel my remembrance of his antecedent displays of prudence and virtue? Having witnessed so many proofs of his consummate penetration, his deep insight into the springs of human action, his sagacity in tracing intricate chains of causes and effects,—recollecting how often the eventual success of his most unpromising schemes had displayed his acute and comprehensive mind, and proved the folly of all my fears, would it not be my duty to pause, before I either questioned his wisdom, censured his conduct, or despaired of its success? Would it not be more rational, as well as more modest, conscious of my own inferiority, to say thus with myself? "I perceive not the end, which my friend has in view. He seems to have expended much ingenuity and much labour, likely, as far as I can discover, to produce immediate evil and dissatisfaction, with no beneficial result. What good purpose he has in contemplation, or how he is to effect it, is to me an entire mystery. But I have experienced such

striking proofs of his profound discernment, and consummate wisdom in accomplishing effects, which I could not anticipate, and educing good from causes, from which I prognosticated evil, that, notwithstanding appearances, I cannot but believe, that the issue, in the present instance, will be such, as to establish a still higher claim to my confidence and admiration." This surely would be our reasoning, and this our conclusion in the case of an intelligent, wise, and virtuous human agent. Need I make the application? Inscrutable to us may be the counsels of Omnipotence; but we may rest assured, that they are founded in consummate wisdom, and perfect benevolence.

SECTION X.

An objection stated and answered.—Arguments deduced from the Phenomena of Nature, as progressive, and as maintained by a succession of Contrarieties.—Argument from the promiscuous Dispensation of good and evil.

IT is objected, that, if the picture which we have drawn of human life, as a state wholly inadequate to man's desires and capacities, and clouded with many evils, be correct, how is a condition so unsatisfactory, to be recon-

ciled with the existence of an all-perfect Being, as its author? This objection resolves itself into the question, why is imperfection admitted under the government of God—a question, which has been already the subject of consideration. In discussing it, we observed, that, if the objector require absolute perfection, he requires an impossibility. If he require relative perfection, or a certain portion of unmixed enjoyment, it is clear, that, whatever might be the degree of that enjoyment, the question with him, constituted as he is, would still be, why is not a larger portion bestowed? To such queries there could be no limit. If the objector urge, that this portion might be combined with a constitution, capable of no conception of a condition higher than its own, it would then follow, that the limited animal pleasure of the snail or the ant, if unmixed with pain, is reconcileable with the infinitude of the Divine attributes, but that the happiness of the human species is repugnant to these perfections. Would this be a just conclusion?

If the question is repeated, why we ascribe higher attributes to the cause, than are exhibited in the effect, we repeat our answer, that the effect is an evidence only of a power

adequate to its production, but furnishes no proof whatever, that a greater power does not belong to the cause. To this objection we shall again have occasion to advert, in our concluding argument, in favour of a futurity. We shall here only observe, that it furnishes no stronger argument against the perfections of Deity, than the gradual and progressive character of every moral, intellectual, and physical process. Gradation seems to be a general law of nature. This is a fact, to which we shall presently refer, as furnishing some ground to believe, that this is only the beginning of our existence. A state of being therefore, imperfect and unsatisfactory, as introductory to a better, is in perfect accordance with the whole economy of our system. There is enough of happiness here to render life desirable, and to shew, that its great Author is good; and enough of inanity, disappointment, and suffering, to justify the hope, that a wise and good Being cannot intend this world to be our ultimate destination.

It has just been remarked, that gradation pervades almost the whole phenomena of nature. Nothing is produced instantaneously in its perfect state. Every transition, with

few exceptions, proceeds by slow, and sometimes imperceptible, degrees. Plants spring from seeds, and gradually proceed to maturity. Animals, by a similar progression, pass through different stages, before they attain perfection. Every change is almost insensibly effected; and every step in the process is preparative to another, until the whole is completed. No part of the Divine plan, in the economy of the universe, is perfected at once. This fact seems to furnish a presumption, that the whole system, as now exhibited, is only the commencement of a scheme, framed in the Eternal mind, maturing by degrees under His direction, and advancing, by a gradual extension of knowledge and virtue, until its consummation shall be accomplished in the ultimate happiness of man.

It is true, that it is equally a law of nature, that perfection, when attained, shall be succeeded by decay and dissolution. But, if we find, that every particle of living matter, dies only to live again in some other form, why should we apprehend, that what constitutes us intelligent and thinking beings, to whose purpose matter unless subservient is utterly valueless, shall everlastingly perish?

If what is in itself impercipient, and void of thought, is indestructible, we have reason to hope, that the thinking substance, which is of infinitely greater worth, will be imperishable. This naturally suggests another argument drawn from the constitution of our system.

The whole economy of nature is maintained by a succession of contrarieties. We remark alternations of light and darkness, pain and pleasure, life and death. The termination of one state is followed by the commencement of its contrary; and this in turn follows the general law. The particle now alive becomes dead, and is revived again in another form; but it never perishes. Now, were we to regard man as a mere *congeries* of material atoms, or even as an impercipient organic being, we should have no more reason to conclude, that the self-same body after death will be restored, than that the dissipated particles, which once constituted a rose or a tulip, though they may live again, will re-form the same organic substances. But this is not the character of man. It is chiefly as a sentient, reasoning, conscious, willing, and moral being, that he exists—not as a mere material form, or even

as simply an organic substance. If matter, then, never perishes, if not even an atom of it is ever destroyed, and if matter itself be of no importance, but as subservient to the purposes of a sentient and intelligent being, can it be reconciled with our notions of infinite wisdom and goodness, to believe that matter as such shall not perish, and that man, as a thinking, conscious being, be what it may, that constitutes him such, will be doomed to annihilation? If that, which has no essential property or quality, as far as we can discover, but magnitude, figure, and motion, is not to perish, can we believe, that what possesses perception, reason, consciousness, volition, with moral susceptibilities and powers, properties of an infinitely higher order, will be consigned to destruction? I would sooner believe, that the material universe, for without mind it is but a senseless mass, would perish for ever, than that one human soul shall be consigned to annihilation.

It is of no consequence to the argument, what constitutes man a thinking being; thought is his distinctive character. And, if matter never loses extension, its essential quality, though the same particle may exist in a variety of states, have we not ground for

believing, that mind, whose essential property is thought, though its powers may be suspended, and though the same mind may exist in different states, will never perish? If no atom of matter is destroyed, have we not reason to expect, that no mind, no percipient, conscious, intelligent being will ever be annihilated?

Among the various arguments, which have been offered in favour of another state of existence, the promiscuous dispensation of good and evil has been eloquently and forcibly urged as one of the most powerful.

Piety is devotion to the Divine Being, as our Creator, our Preserver, and our Benefactor. Virtue, as a principle of conduct, is an active desire to promote the happiness of others; and, in respect to ourselves, it is an obedience to those rules for the government of appetite and passion, which the Author of our existence has prescribed. Its obligation is founded in the will of our Maker; and this will is, to a certain extent, deducible from the character of Deity, and the moral constitution, with which He has endowed us. Vice, on the contrary, consists in the gratification of selfish passions, malevolent feelings,

and intemperate appetites, tending to the production of inquietude and disorder, the degradation of our nature, and the infelicity of others.

The Deity is benevolent. This is a truth, incontrovertibly established by clear and conclusive evidence. Misery is not the character of our system; happiness predominates; and a mixture of benevolence and malignity in a perfect being, is manifestly impossible. The Deity then wills the happiness of His creatures; He therefore wills virtue, as subservient to that happiness. This truth we learn not only from His perfections, but from the constitution of our moral nature. His approbation of virtue is amply testified by annexing to the benevolent affections the purest and most lasting pleasure, of which the human soul is susceptible, and to the malignant passions the sharpest suffering. And it is of supreme importance to observe, that, while pains and pleasures, arising from other causes, depend on external circumstances, which we cannot control, the delights of virtue, and the agonies of vice, no human power can either give, or take away. This furnishes a conclusive proof, that these awards, though guilt sometimes

blunts its sting, constitute a law of our moral nature. This is an important consideration in the present argument. Virtue, then, as far as our happiness depends on those acquirements, which are in every man's power, namely, a sense of conscious rectitude, the peace of mind attending it, and the delights associated with active benevolence, temperate habits, and fervent piety, is her own reward; and vice, on the contrary, generally its own punishment.

But the pleasures of virtue, and the pains of vice, are not the only pleasures and pains, which we are ordained to feel. If it were so, the good man would uniformly be happy, and the wicked miserable. The present state would then be a state of retribution. Health, liberty, a competent provision of the necessaries and comforts of life, the sympathetic delights arising from the society of relatives and friends, the means of acquiring useful knowledge, and of supplying the wants, and relieving the miseries of our fellow-creatures, constitute important and invaluable sources of enjoyment; while, on the other hand, indigence and disease, persecution and slavery, with the sufferings, or death of those, whom we hold dear, are felt to be evils, and subtract much

from the happiness, which even good men, suffering under such calamities and afflictions, derive from the feeling of conscious virtue. The argument, then, proceeds thus. The Deity, by the constitution of our nature, has clearly expressed His will, that virtue should be the rule of our conduct, and that we should hate vice, as destructive to our happiness. No farther proof of this truth can be necessary, than the peace and serenity of mind, which never fail to accompany the one, and the self-reproach, the feverish inquietude, and misery, almost universally, attendant on the other. To this evidence may be added, the tendency of the one to promote health, safety, reputation, and worldly success, and that of the latter to debase the soul, to corrode the heart, to enfeeble the body, and to degrade the character.

But, in the general economy of His government, we find, that physical good and evil are not dispensed with that discrimination, which we perceive exhibited in the constitution of our moral nature. To almost every physical evil incident to our condition, the good and the bad are equally liable. The convulsions of nature, the devastations of war, the horrors of famine, the ravages of

pestilence, are calamities, in which both are equally involved. From disease and sorrow, and the pangs of expiring nature, neither is exempted.

But not only are good and bad men indiscriminately subjected to the same common calamities, and doomed to share the same common fate, in respect to physical evils, but we even find the natural order of things reversed,—the former depressed, the latter exalted; the former condemned to toil, hunger, and disease; the latter enjoying health, honour, ease, and affluence. The successful villain rises to eminence, lives in splendour, and triumphs in his guilt; while honest poverty pines in obscurity and dependence, the oppressor's victim, and the proud man's scorn. If we behold numerous examples of God's retributive justice, we find many instances, in which the virtuous suffer "for righteousness' sake."

These are the facts. From this state of things, then, what conclusion are we to draw? Shall we say, that virtue and vice are, by the pleasures and pains connected with them, sufficiently recompensed? This is not true. There are cases of sore distress, which the good man is sometimes doomed to bear, in

which the feeling of self-complacency is overwhelmed and lost. There are cases, in which the soul, with every conviction of its innocence, looks forward with terror to the evils, which it must endure. In such situations, the testimony of conscience operates merely as an alleviation of the evil, which it cannot remove, though it may enable us to bear it; but cannot be regarded, as the recompence of suffering virtue. Nay, how many instances occur, in which the meritorious victim to a sense of duty does not survive, to receive the meed of a self-approving conscience? Where is the natural reward of piety and virtue, when the martyr expires at the stake, or the patriot falls in resistance to a tyrant's rod, and in defence of his country's freedom?

Shall we conclude, then, that virtue and vice are objects of indifference to the Deity? This cannot be supposed. It is impossible. It would be a conclusion, repugnant to all our notions of perfection, to all our sentiments of right and wrong, and contradicted by that moral retribution, which He has established in our constitution. Whatever is ordained as a law in the nature of the creature, must be regarded as a law in the intention of the Creator. We cannot, therefore,

believe, that virtue and vice are indifferent to Deity.

If the one, then, be an object of His approbation, and the other of His abhorrence, what, should we naturally expect, would be the condition of each under His government? Should we not anticipate, that every good man would not only be blessed with all the moral gratifications, which the Deity has connected with conscious rectitude, but also with the enjoyment of every physical good; while, on the contrary, the guilty soul would be doomed to every moral and physical evil? This, certainly, would be our anticipation. But this is not our condition. Is the Deity then unjust? Has He prescribed a law for my observance, and rendered my obedience to that law the source of calamity and sorrow, unredeemed by any recompence here or hereafter? This would be iniquity and cruelty. Human nature, with all its errors and infirmities, would revolt against the commission of a wrong so monstrous. Surely, then, if justice be a virtue, respected by men, and honoured with their approbation, it must be essential to the nature of that Being, in whom dwelleth every possible perfection. We must either, then, conclude the contra-

diction, that perfect justice can commit injustice; or that this state is not our final destination, but the incipiency of a retribution to be completed hereafter, when the counsels of Infinite Truth and Wisdom will be fully unfolded.

Our moral feelings are in strict accordance with this conclusion. Why does our virtuous indignation swell against the audacious villain, the successful hypocrite, the remorseless tyrant, who defies all human tribunals, spurning the laws of God and man? Why do we breathe the ardent wish, that the murderer, stained with innocent blood, or the despoiler of the orphan and the widow, may not escape with impunity; and that he, who is a father to the fatherless, and a friend to those, who have none to help them, may prosper? These are not factitious feelings. They are congenial to our nature. They rise spontaneously in every breast. They are the inspirations of the Parent of our being, the Great Arbiter of our destiny, who loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity. They are internal annunciations of that justice, which ultimately awaits "the evil and the good."

The argument then is briefly this. Either the Deity is not just; or there must be a fu-

ture retribution. But justice is a virtue, which belongs even to man; and to deny the attribute to Deity, is to exalt the creature above the Creator. God, therefore, is just; and if his justice be not fully manifested here, where our existence may be only temporary, we must conclude, that the time will come, when it will be perfectly displayed, and when "every man will receive according to his works."

SECTION XI.

Argument for a Future State, drawn from the Divine Benevolence.

In presenting to the reader the preceding evidence in favour of a futurity, we have, in several instances, employed the argument, which it is now our intention more fully to enforce.

That the Deity is a Being of pure and unbounded benevolence, is a truth established by the clearest evidence. The constitution of nature amply attests His goodness; and if He possesses this attribute, its purity and perfection, as residing in a Being, exalted above all those selfish passions, all those irri-

table feelings—those jealousies, rivalries, and wrongs, in which malignity originates—follows as a necessary consequence. Malevolence is a sure and infallible evidence of imperfection. It can have no place, but as associated with error and weakness. If it could exist in an infinite Being, it would display itself by the production of infinite misery. To suppose it to belong to an Eternal, Self-existent, and Independent Being, the Author of happiness, is to suppose a contradiction.

Now, it is utterly repugnant to our notion of benevolence to believe, that the Deity would give existence to any creature, who, He foresaw, would be subject to a balance of irremediable suffering, during the whole course of its existence. Whatever benevolence exists in the most humane heart, is the inspiration of Deity, and must fall infinitely short of that, which belongs to God. Yet, imperfect as this affection is in man, is there a human being possessing the common sympathies of our nature, who would deliberately and gratuitously be the cause of existence to any creature, whose life, he was certain, would be nothing but a series of pains and sorrows? If our feelings revolt against such wanton inhumanity, is it not

impiety to impute such malignity to the Supreme Being? Can our sensibilities be more tender, our benevolence more pure, than the source, from which they are derived? If then, we should justly reprobate as a monster, unworthy of the human name, the man who should premeditately and gratuitously be the means of giving birth to a being, whose existence, he knew, would be wretched; can we, without incurring the charge not only of absurdity, but impiety, ascribe such procedure to the Author of all goodness? No. Fruitless suffering cannot be created by a benevolent Being. Humanity itself recoils at the thought.

Now, how many human creatures are hourly introduced into existence, whose brief history from their cradle to their grave, is chiefly that of disease and pain—evils perhaps inherited from parents, and certainly such, as the helpless victims had no share in creating? How many breathe only a few hours, and these hours of acute suffering, and then expire? Is it consistent with the wisdom of Deity to create such abortions? Is it reconcileable with His goodness to give existence to beings born to be wretched? I must either deny the benevolence of the Pa-

rent of the universe, in opposition to the clearest evidence, and degrade him below the character of man; or, in every miserable being sent into the world to suffer, I must acknowledge an irresistible argument for a future state. I behold the new born babe, convulsed with pain, and closing its eyes ere it has well beheld the light. Can I believe, that a God of perfect goodness could create it for no other purpose, than thus to suffer? I look at the houseless and wretched beggar in our streets, born in poverty and ignorance, inheriting disease, placed in circumstances of abjection and wretchedness, from which he has no escape, but death, and can I believe that a benevolent Being created him for this end? It is impossible. Either the Deity is not benevolent, a proposition which the constitution of nature disproves, and which my reason rejects; or these beings are formed for a better state of things. Here I take my stand; on this ground I rest my conviction. The great preponderance of happiness convinces me, that God is good; exceptions to pure and universal happiness do not subvert this conviction; for reason teaches me, that, if the Deity is good, He must be infinitely good.

Nay, if the evils, which I behold around me, should weaken my persuasion of His infinite wisdom, or His infinite power, they cannot destroy my firm and well grounded belief in His pure benevolence. Were it even then to be imagined, that His wisdom and power are limited, and incapable of rescuing these sufferers from wretchedness, when they have once been brought into existence, which would be a very irrational conception, surely we may presume, that either foreseeing, that their lives would be miserable, or doubtful, what would be their future condition, His benevolence would not commit their fate to chance, but would restrain His power from calling them into existence. For, were we even to question His omniscience, is it reconcileable with His benevolence to believe, that He would call into operation a system of general laws, the most remote and minute effects of which He did not foresee, and which might, therefore, contrary to His benevolent designs, produce results of preponderating misery to millions of His creatures? The notion is incredible; it implies a contradiction. Gratuitous evil His benevolence must abhor; and irremediable evil, if any evil could be supposed to baffle Omnipotence,

His wisdom would exclude. Here then, there is no medium. I must either reject the benevolence of Deity, in opposition to clear and irresistible evidence, or I must believe, that the present state is not the whole of our being.

It may be urged, perhaps, that this argument would avail to prove merely, that a state of future happiness awaits those only, who have suffered more than they have enjoyed, or whose lives here have been short and wretched. The answer is obvious. If it be essential to His benevolence, and within the compass of His power, to grant immortality to these, it is equally in His power, and He must be equally disposed, to confer it on all. Even human benevolence, with all its imperfections, prescribes to itself no limits in its exercise, saying, "Thus far will I go, and no farther." Can we then suppose, that the pure and unbounded goodness of Deity will deny that immortality to all, which it has the power of bestowing?

It has been said, that a preponderance of enjoyment in the present state, is sufficient to vindicate the goodness of the Deity. If by a preponderance in happiness is meant a balance in favour of the whole, as an aggre-

gate, the proposition is false. A being, even of limited benevolence, such as man, would not, if he could, create a race of creatures, satisfied, if the sum total of their happiness, as a whole, exceeded that of their suffering. To deny existence is a negative evil; it creates no pain—no sorrow; but to give existence to beings, whose pains and sorrows shall overbalance their enjoyments, is to inflict a positive evil, and is utterly inconsistent with the character of benevolence. What does it matter, or what consolation is it, to a wretched human being, dragging on his hours in hopeless misery, that there is a balance of happiness in favour of his species? If there be no future state, how can this reflection mitigate his suffering? It may tempt him to accuse his Maker of partiality, and may aggravate his distress; but surely can never serve to reconcile him to his condition, or make him think with gratitude or reverence of the Being, who made him.

If by a preponderance of enjoyment be meant a balance of happiness in favour of each individual, the answer is, that such preponderance does not exist. It is true, that there is a great balance of virtue and happiness in favour of the species; it is true, also,

that much the major part of mankind enjoy far more than they suffer; but the exceptions are not few. Many are born with disease, breathe in pain, and die in agony. A preponderance of enjoyment in favour of every individual, does not exist; the supposition, therefore, is inconsistent with fact. On this ground, then, the benevolence of the Divine Being cannot be vindicated.

But, were it even true, that the sufferings of every individual are exceeded by his enjoyments, this would evince goodness in the Deity; but it would not be that goodness, which belongs to a Being possessing all his attributes in perfection; not even that benevolence, which man, imperfect as he is, would be prompted to exercise. Such goodness could be vindicated only on one or other of two suppositions, either that there exists a future state, or that it surpasses the power of Deity to confer unmixed enjoyment here, or immortality hereafter, on any of his creatures; of which alternatives, the latter, we presume, may be dismissed without argument, as wholly untenable.

Let us suppose, then, a choice of either of these two conditions. 1st, That an infinite series of beings might be produced, all in

succession, subject to annihilation, but each generation not merely as a whole, but as individuals, enjoying a balance of happiness, and let us suppose this series to be continued through eternity; or, 2dly, a limited series of beings, placed in similar circumstances, but all destined to immortality; would not benevolence, if it were associated with the power of accomplishing its wishes, prefer the latter? The negation of existence is not an evil. It involves no suffering, either in reality, or in fancy, either as present, or as anticipated. Nothing is lost. But to be annihilated, after tasting the sweets of life, is a deprivation of enjoyment, which we contemplate with dread, and to which we submit with repugnance, as a calamity at once great and irreparable. A person, who had never known the blessing of sight, and who, by associating with blind men, had been a stranger to the value of the visual faculty, would not feel the privation to be any misfortune. Far different is *his* condition, who, after enjoying the pleasures of this inestimable sense for many years, has, through disease or accident, been afflicted with blindness. It would surely, then, be the aim of benevolence to confer bounties, which it had the

power to perpetuate, though confined to a smaller number, rather than extend them to an infinitude of beings, each doomed to lose them, when he became sensible of their value. The absence of a blessing, of which we have no conception, is not felt; but the deprivation of every enjoyment is painful. To give the taste of pleasure only to withdraw it, is surely not the characteristic of benevolence.

Unless, then, we are to suppose, that it exceeds the power of the Deity to make any of His creatures immortal, we must believe, that His benevolence would prompt Him to continue existence to those, on whom He had conferred it, rather than to produce an infinite series of beings, each favoured with a preponderance of happiness, and doomed to lose it almost in the instant of its communication. A balance, then, of happiness in the species, would not serve to vindicate the goodness of the Deity; and a balance of happiness in each individual, we have every reason for believing, does not exist. Has the Deity then given existence to beings, whose pains, short as they may be, exceed their pleasures? Is it not a contradiction to suppose that goodness can create for the infliction of

misery? Has He favoured others with a balance of happiness, and thus made them feel the value of life, and desirous to continue it; and will He dash the cup from their lips, and rob them of the blessing, when they have tasted its delights, and begun to enjoy it? Has He provided the most complicated means for the production and sustentation of a human being, to annihilate it for ever at the moment of its birth? How is the brief existence of a creature, born in one hour, and expiring the next, to be reconciled with the wisdom and benevolence of Deity, but on the hypothesis, that this is not its only or ultimate destination, and that there is a Future State?

When we contemplate, then, the power, the wisdom, and the benevolence of the Creator, we cannot believe, that they would be exerted in producing beings, however small the number, whose pains and sorrows He foresaw would exceed their pleasures; or that He would impart to any of His creatures conscious happiness, which it were in his power to continue, and yet rob them of it in the moment of enjoyment. Still less can we believe, that He would consign any, or suffer them to be subjected, to indignity and op-

pression, to persecution and death, for an obedience to the laws, which He himself ordained, if this were to be their sole and ultimate destiny.

SECTION XII.

Objections answered.—Summary of the Arguments.—Conclusion.

To the preceding reasoning it has been objected, that the very arguments, which are here employed, namely, the unsatisfactory condition, in which we are placed, the abortive productions, which we daily witness, and the numerous evils, to which we are liable, and from which no prudence or virtue can protect us, disprove the infinitude of those perfections, whence we infer a Future existence. Why, it is asked, do we ascribe infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, to the Author of the system, when the very evils, whence we conclude a Futurity, are acknowledged to be irreconcileable with absolute perfection? Do not the rules of just reasoning forbid us to attribute a higher degree of power to the cause, than is manifested in the effect?

This objection we have elsewhere endeavoured to obviate; and to shew, that the position, on which it is founded, is wholly inadmissible. We deny, in the most express terms, that it is to be received as a maxim, that the effect furnishes a just measure of the power of the cause. Our reasons for rejecting this assumed maxim have been already stated. But, as the subject is superlatively important, the objection aiming at the subversion of all our reasoning, the reader, we hope, will pardon us, if we here briefly repeat these reasons, and offer one or two additional observations.

In order to justify us in ascribing knowledge to a human agent, it is not necessary, that he should be free from error; nor do we deny to him the character of wisdom, if his conduct be generally distinguished by prudence, though it should be occasionally chargeable with rashness and indiscretion. No person would maintain, that the inventor of a machine was destitute of ingenuity, because there were some defects in its construction, which he was unable to supply, some imperfections, which he could not remove. The absence, then, of error, is not necessary to the inference of intelligence;

nor does occasional failure, in attempting to produce good, preclude the deduction of power and benevolence, if the general conduct be characterized by an exhibition of these qualities.

Now, it has been proved, by incontrovertible facts, drawn from the phenomena of nature, that power, wisdom, and goodness, are displayed in the constitution of our system, and must belong to its Author, as attributes in His nature. The conclusion, to which we are thus led, cannot be invalidated by any real or presumed defects, which may appear in its economy. The question then is, in what degree are these attributes ascribable to its Author? Are we to confine them within those limits, which a survey of our little world would prescribe? Are we to attribute to the Creator no greater degree of power, wisdom, and goodness, than the phenomena here display? This is the question.

We have had already occasion to observe, that any one effect furnishes no infallible criterion by which we can measure the power* of the cause. The effect is evidence of power adequate to its production, but is

* By power, is here meant, not simply physical power, but ability to produce, or power combined with intelligence.

no proof, that the cause possesses no higher power. The effect may be partially seen, or it may be only one out of many, which we have not the means of examining; as such, therefore, it affords no standard whatever, by which we can limit the power of its cause. The truth of this position may be evinced by a familiar illustration. Let us suppose a person to be shewn the exterior wheel of a water-mill, unacquainted, we assume, with the nature and purpose of such a machine. He perceives the wheel in motion; he observes the reservoir for collecting the water, he notices the sluice for letting it out, he sees the channel formed for conducting it to the wheel, and discharging it on the cogs, and he perceives these to be aptly made for receiving it; he naturally, therefore, ascribes to the machinist that degree of ingenuity, which these contrivances display. But he perceives only a part of the whole effect, and were he to estimate the ingenuity of the millwright by this specimen of his skill, he would err egregiously. Let him be introduced into the interior, and examine the machinery there; and he will immediately acknowledge, that what he had previously seen, exhibited a very fallacious, as well as unfavourable,

criterion of the ingenuity of the machinist. The analogy is obvious.

When we reflect, that the little sphere on which we are placed, is a mere peppercorn compared with the universe, and man's existence but a point to eternity, it is the excess of folly, it is irrational in the extreme, to suppose, that the Deity possesses no greater power, than is discernible by us. It is equally absurd as to assert, that our globe is the universe, and that man is the only intelligent being in God's creation. We reject, then, as false and utterly incredible the dogma, that the wisdom and goodness of the Deity are to be limited by an effect, which, in the immensity of creation, is absolutely insignificant. When the human eye can penetrate to the extreme boundaries of the universe, and minutely examine every orb in the immeasurable space, we may then, but not before, have some ground, weak as it might be, for affirming, that our knowledge, or our world, is a measure of the wisdom and benevolence of the Creator.

But not only does the vast extent of the creation forbid us to limit the attributes of the Deity to that degree of excellence, which suffices only for the production of our globe:

but we have, in the very nature of an eternal and self-existent Being, an irresistible argument, which no sophistry can elude, an argument amounting to demonstration, that His attributes must be infinite. Limited perfection in an Independent Being would be a manifest contradiction; a Being, partly finite and partly infinite, would be an absurdity. This argument is conclusive.

The maxim therefore, which is assumed by the Sceptic, we reject for the following reasons:—1st, Because in no case can the effect prove more or less than this, than that the cause was adequate to its production. If we have no authority for asserting, that the power of the cause was greater, than the effect exhibits, we have no positive ground for denying it; and sufficient reasons may be assigned for believing not only that it *may*, but that it actually *does*, possess greater power than is displayed in the effect. The relative power of a cause in any particular instance, cannot enable us to determine its absolute strength.

2dly, This maxim can be true in those cases only, in which the whole effect, of which the cause is capable, is clearly ascertained. It is thus only, that we can infer

the extent of its power with any degree of certainty. We do not perceive the whole effect, and therefore cannot estimate the whole power of the cause.

3dly, Our judgments are not always to be limited by experience. Reason often compels us to extend our conclusion. The phenomena of the universe teach us, that they must have a cause; but they do not teach us, yet we must believe, that the cause must be Self-existent, and Eternal. Here reason tells us, what the visible effect does not communicate. By sense we acquire the notion of distance; but reason goes farther, teaching us, that space is unlimited. Hence

4thly, Whatever attributes the phenomena of nature display as belonging to Deity, these he must possess in an infinite degree. Here we have a necessary truth, founded in the essential nature of an Eternal and Self-existent Being, which no argument, drawn from a limited experience, can subvert, and to which, no contingent truth, derived from that experience, can be rationally opposed. For these reasons, then, we reject the dogma, that our system can furnish a just measure of the attributes of the cause.

5thly, There is another fallacy in the ar-

gument, which opposes the mixed character of our system to the credibility of the infinitude of the Divine perfections; and to this error we would now direct the reader's attention.

The argument assumes, that the power of the cause is to be measured by the effect; and therefore that the attributes of the Deity, unless proved by the phenomena to be infinite, cannot be legitimately concluded to be infinite. This assumption, we apprehend, is not only false, but absurd. It involves an impossibility. No limited phenomena—no finite effects can simply, or by themselves, evince an infinite cause. The notion of infinitude is not to be acquired by any information, which sense can give us; it is the suggestion of reason and reflection. To assume therefore, that the phenomena of our system, in whatever manner it were constituted, could prove the infinite goodness of Deity, is a manifest absurdity: and to deny *that* infinitude, because its effects must be to us finite, is equally absurd. We might with as good reason deny *eternity*, because we know nothing of time but as consisting of hours, days and years; or infinite space, because we are sensible of nothing but dis-

tance, as measured by feet, furlongs, or miles. That an Eternal Being must be infinite is a self-evident truth; but finite effects, which are the only effects perceptible to a finite being, could never immediately conduct us to this conclusion. Yet, we must believe, that there exists an Eternal and Infinite Being. Is the finite and created effect a measure of its Infinite and Self-existent Cause?

There are only two possible conditions, consistent with Divine benevolence, in which we could be placed, namely, either a state of pure but limited happiness, or a mixed system, resembling the one, to which we belong. If the latter be deemed irreconcileable with the infinite perfections of Deity, it is an error to imagine, that the former would not present a similar difficulty. For, let it be supposed, that a race of beings, like ourselves, are placed in a state of happiness relatively perfect; they must either have a notion of enjoyment superior to their own, or must be incapable of conceiving the possibility of a condition happier than theirs. If they feel, that their gratifications and pleasures are less ample or less refined, than they might be, if the supposition can be

admitted as possible, they will naturally ask, why did not infinite perfection confer a higher degree of felicity? Is our limited happiness consistent with boundless wisdom and goodness, combined with omnipotent power? Can that Being be infinitely wise and good, who communicates only imperfect enjoyment? If, on the contrary, they have no conception of a condition better than their own, then it is evident, that they could form no notion of infinite attributes—no idea of a power capable of communicating still higher felicity. Thus it is clear, that no possible condition of our being could, from the mere phenomena, suggest the conception of infinite attributes, or be reconcileable with our vain notions of their necessary effects. To expect therefore that any finite system, however constituted, could of itself point to an Infinite Cause, is to expect a contradiction; and to question the infinitude of the Great First Cause in all His attributes, because finite beings can only perceive finite effects, involves an equal absurdity.

It is further objected, that the argument, founded in the perfections of Deity, is wholly fallacious, presenting a palpable example of circular reasoning. It is said, that we as-

sume the infinite goodness of Deity, and hence infer a future state of existence; or we affirm a futurity, in order to vindicate His perfect benevolence, each position being assumed alternately, to prove the other. As this objection has been urged with great confidence as unanswerable and conclusive, it will be necessary to examine it with some attention.

In the first place, it may be observed in reply, that the objection confounds two things, which are evidently quite distinct. It proceeds on the assumption, that to vindicate an attribute of the Deity, is one and the same thing, as to demonstrate its existence. This is an error, and invalidates the objection. We may have ample ground for ascribing to a friend the virtues of veracity, justice, and benevolence, and yet find it necessary, in certain cases, to reconcile his conduct with the possession of these qualities. His excellencies we may know from incontestable facts, and long experience; of them we require no farther evidence; but his conduct may be seemingly, though not really, inconsistent with his disposition. But surely we ought not to confound the proof of a fact with an endeavour to reconcile it

with the existence of another fact,—the vindication of an attribute with the demonstration of its reality.

In the second place it may be observed, that our argument, as far at least as our conclusion is concerned, requires not the existence of infinite power, wisdom, and benevolence, as the objection presumes. No higher degree of these attributes is necessary, to establish the probability of our doctrine, than the phenomena of nature clearly display. We are surrounded with evidence of more wisdom, more power, and more goodness, than, we have reason to believe, would suffice, to recommend and to effect a continuation of our being. The power and the wisdom cannot be questioned. He, who at first inspired life, by means incomprehensible to us, can with the same facility continue it; or after interruption restore it, in any form, which He may think fit. Nay, have we not in the astonishing transformations, to which we have alluded, in the insect tribes, the evidence of facts to prove, that a power exists, capable of continuing life in a higher grade of being, after the original *exuviæ* are thrown off, and the former organization completely destroyed?

The necessary benevolence is equally indubitable. The Divine Being is not subject to change. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." It cannot, then, be doubted, that the benevolence, in which originated the creation of man, for the communication of happiness, is sufficient to prompt to the continuation of our existence, for the same benevolent purpose. Nay, we must arrogate to ourselves a superiority to the Author of all goodness, if we can believe, that human benevolence delights to save life, and to diffuse happiness, but that the Deity has not the same kindly feeling to the creatures of His own hand. We maintain, therefore, that the infinitude of the Divine attributes is not necessary to our conclusion, and that we have ample evidence of power, wisdom, and goodness sufficient to recommend and to effect a continuation of our existence.

But we do not rest satisfied with returning this answer. Waiving the obvious distinction between the vindication of an attribute, and the proof of its existence, we maintain, that the charge of circular reasoning is false and groundless. Our argument is clear, consistent, and strictly correct. It is founded in

evidence, which it is impossible to controvert; and the conclusion is that, to which every rational mind may assent. If we attempted to prove the benevolence of Deity by assuming the existence of a future state, and then to prove the existence of this futurity, by assuming the infinitude of the Divine benevolence, we should then indeed be justly chargeable with circular reasoning. But such is not the character of the argument, which we have offered. It proceeds thus.

Power, wisdom, and goodness are manifested in the economy of nature. The power is visible in the planetary revolutions, and the countless multitude of orbs, by which we are surrounded in the immensity of space. The wisdom is displayed in the order and harmony of the whole, but more impressively by the aptitude of means to useful ends in this lower system, to which we belong. We have then the evidence of facts, which can neither be misunderstood, nor disputed, that these two attributes belong to the Deity. Here then there is no assumption.

In evidence of goodness we appeal to the constitution of moral and physical nature. Reasoning from the effect to the cause, we contend, that it is absolutely impossible, be-

cause it implies a contradiction to suppose, that a system, in which happiness visibly predominates, and is accomplished by means adapted to the end, can be the production of a malignant Being. We must either believe, in opposition to the clearest evidence, that the Author of our system possesses not the power to render us miserable; or we must believe, that, were He malevolent, all our sources of pleasure would be ceaseless causes of pain—the body racked with disease, and the soul tortured with passion. We must either believe the contradiction, that a malignant being can act with benevolence, voluntarily producing happiness, yet *willing* misery; or we must conclude, that goodness is an attribute belonging to the Author of this system. Here, again, there is no gratuitous assumption. The phenomena of nature attest His benevolence. This, then, is our first position, that the Deity is a powerful, wise, and good Being. This primary truth being established by facts, the next question is, whether these attributes belong to Him, in an infinite degree.

The infinitude of His power may be concluded, 1st, because there is no external cause, by which it can be limited, every created thing

being the production of His hand, and obedient to His will; and, 2dly, no internal cause; for equality of mutually conflicting powers could accomplish nothing; and power, in any degree, opposed to power, would be an argument of weakness. But every perfection must belong to Deity, otherwise a possibility would become impossible; and to attribute infirmity to a perfect Being, the Author of all power, would be absurd.

The infinitude of His wisdom is equally indisputable. All causes are of His ordination, and can operate only by His will. The powers and properties, therefore, of every created agent must be known to Him, with their effects, extending through the ages of eternity. And, when we reflect, though finite beings can perceive only finite phenomena, that, with all the aids, which art can furnish, we can discover no limit to the universe, and can conceive no reason, why it should extend to a certain point, and stop there, we are irresistibly led to suppose it to be infinite, and, therefore, the wisdom and power by which it was created, and is governed, to be likewise infinite. This conclusion, as will presently appear, is confirmed by the very nature of the subject.

Is the Deity infinitely benevolent? is the next question.

From the mixed condition of the present state, we should naturally infer, without other evidence, that, if there be no deficiency of wisdom, or of power, there must be a defect of benevolence in the Author of the system. Reason, however, forbids us to draw this conclusion, and on these grounds.

1st, Every degree of malevolence argues weakness; weakness is imperfection; but imperfection in a Self-existent, Independent, and Intelligent Being, would imply a contradiction.

2dly, Pure benevolence is possible; but if possible it must belong to the Deity, otherwise it would be impossible. This also would be a contradiction. Possibility of excellence must be in Him a reality.

3dly, If pure benevolence did not exist somewhere—if it were not an attribute of the Divine nature,—it is evidently impossible, that the notion of pure benevolence could ever enter into the human mind. Whence is it to be derived, but from the Author of our nature? And to suppose, that the idea only of pure benevolence, and not the reality, exists in the Divine mind, is to suppose a

contradiction. It is to suppose the Fountain of all perfection to have the conception of a being superior to Himself.

4thly, A being self-existent, powerful, and intelligent, infinite in duration, but finite in other respects, or uniting in himself discordant attributes, would be a combination of contradictions, which it would be an absurdity to suppose. This proof is equally applicable to the attributes of power and wisdom, as necessarily infinite.

For these reasons, then, we conclude with certainty, notwithstanding the mixed condition of our state, that the Deity is a being purely benevolent. The conclusion of benevolence simply, has the phenomena of nature for its basis; and reason teaches us, that there is no medium between the admission of pure benevolence, and our assent to contradictions. Nature proclaims that God is good; reason assures us, that He must be purely and perfectly good. Our conclusion, then, is not assumed, but proved. It is a truth, which seems to demand our assent with resistless force. It rests not on metaphysical argument only, but on experience. It is a fact as indisputable, that happiness, attesting the benevolence of its Author, preponderates, as that evil exists; and the per-

fect purity of this benevolence is a truth, as clearly established by reason, as the existence of good and evil is proved by experience. The argument, therefore, is not circular. The Divine attributes are evinced by the conclusive evidence of incontrovertible facts; and their infinitude is a deduction necessarily involved in the very nature of the subject. Finitude and infinitude, as co-existing attributes in the same being, would be a manifest impossibility.—Perfection excludes such contrarieties. The Deity, then, is infinitely wise, powerful, and good. Hence, we may with certainty infer, that, "whatever is, is right," and that, if He has placed us here in a world, inadequate to our capacities of enjoyment, this is not to be our only destination,—if He has subjected us to evils and to death, the last of all evils, it is only for the communication of higher happiness; and that, if He has imparted to us the notion, and inspired us with the hope, of a future existence, that notion, and that hope, have not been given us in vain. Gratuitous evil must be abhorrent to His nature, and irremediable evil would be an impeachment of His wisdom and His omnipotence. Do we anticipate with confidence, that a friend, whose benevolence and kindness we have long ex-

perienced, will not wantonly subject us to suffering; that he will not maliciously rob us of a benefit, which his goodness has conferred; that he will consult those feelings, and those hopes which he himself has created; and will confer with pleasure any favour, which he has the power to bestow; and shall we believe, that the Author of our being, He, who hath made us, what we are, will disappoint those hopes, and frustrate those desires, which He Himself has inspired,—that He will rob us of a blessing, which He has gratuitously bestowed, and which He has the power not only to continue, but to improve? If we have reason to confide in the tried friendship and benevolence of a human being, who, however pre-eminent among his fellows for knowledge and virtue, is still, through the imbecility of our common nature, susceptible of change, we have surely infinitely stronger reason for placing confidence in the Eternal Parent of our existence, whose nature is immutable, and "in whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning."

To conclude.—In enquiring into the origin and end of our existence, every man, methinks, should thus reason with himself.

I find myself here placed in a world, where I am surrounded with phenomena, which excite my astonishment, and for which I have the fullest conviction, that it is impossible to account, unless on the supposition of an Intelligent First Cause. I look especially at my own frame, and cannot but refer it to a wise and benevolent being, as its author. To tell me, that a structure so wonderful in all its powers, corporeal and mental, is the creature of blind necessity, is to insult my reason, by telling me, that it is, because it must be. It is to require of me to assent to the absurdity, that what has no intelligence may impart intelligence; that brute atoms, though incapable of design, may yet produce the effects of wisdom and contrivance; and that a senseless necessity can achieve what human ingenuity cannot accomplish, and what human sagacity cannot even comprehend. It is to offer a hypothesis, which satisfies no enquiry, and explains not a single fact. I feel, therefore, the irresistible conviction, that my existence, and that of the universe around me, must be ascribed to a wise and designing Power. I must believe, also, that the Author of all existence must be Himself eternal, for this is a self-evident and necessary truth.

The properties of every cause, being inferred from its effects, I collect the attributes of this Being from the character of the system in which I am placed. And if, in every other instance, from complicated and numberless concurrences conducting to beneficial effects, I infer benevolence to prompt, wisdom to contrive, and power to execute, I must, if I reason consistently, come to a similar conclusion here. Malevolence cannot contrive happiness, nor ignorance act in wisdom. I conclude, therefore, that the Supreme First Cause is powerful, wise, and good.

But it is only a mere atom of the universe, with which I am acquainted; and finite effects cannot evince an infinite cause. Here reason steps in, and teaches me, that unless I assent to a contradiction, I must believe, that a Being, infinite in existence, must be infinite in all His attributes. But the evils, which I behold around me, seem at variance with this belief. Am I then to conclude, that the Deity is an imperfect Being? This inference my understanding instantly rejects, as involving the contradiction, that perfection is possible, yet impossible, and that an infinite being may have finite perfections. I must

therefore infer, that I perceive only a part of His vast designs, that the counsels of His wisdom are not here completely unfolded, that He has ulterior purposes to effect, and that the present is only preparatory to another state. To this conclusion I am led by the known attributes of the Divine Being, taken in connection with the general economy of the system, to which I belong, and the peculiar circumstances, in which I am placed. For I perceive in the constitution of nature, the most impressive displays of wisdom and goodness, in the adaptation of causes to effects. I find every thing suited to its purpose; and though my ignorance might, in a few instances, tempt me to conclude differently, I have the strongest reason for believing, that nothing is useless. Mutual aptitudes pervade the whole. In the animal creation, particularly, we observe the same congruities of relation. Every organ is accommodated to its function; every appetite is adapted to its purpose, and provided with its gratification. No desire is created in vain; nothing is superfluous, nothing defective. Can I believe, then, that man, the highest of animated beings on this globe, is to be an

exception to this general ordination of his Maker?—That he is the only creature on earth, in whom these perfect adjustments do not exist, and in whose condition they were never intended to exist?—That the good and wise Author of his being, has given him a notion of an eternity, in which he is to have no share, an idea of a futurity, which is never to be his, a desire of immortality only to be disappointed, a hope of an hereafter, never to be realized? While I perceive every other animal adapted to its sphere, its desires confined to its present existence, having no notion of any condition higher than its own, satisfied with its lot, its appetites, and its gratifications being mutually adjusted, and at the same time observe the inadequacy of man's enjoyments to his capacities and desires, I find it impossible to account for this extraordinary exception to the general economy, without either impeaching the consistency of the Divine Being, or concluding that the exception is only temporary, and that another destiny awaits us.

In the constitution also of that mind, which the Deity has given me, and in the ordinary course of His moral government, I

find a rule prescribed for the general regulation of my conduct. Can I then believe, that for my conformity to a law, which He wills me to obey, a conformity, which may be opposed to my immediate interest, He will subject me to suffering, without recompence, and without hope? And, if the price of obedience is the deprivation of life, where is the reward? Is he who reveres his Maker, and loves his neighbour, to share the same fate with him, who neither fears God, nor regards man? Is justice an empty name? Or if I regard this attribute as a modification of His benevolence, can I believe, that wisdom can display folly, goodness wantonly inflict suffering, or omnipotence not effect, what benevolence and wisdom may direct? If I can believe this, I may assent to any absurdity. No. If man is doomed to suffer either here, or hereafter, the benevolence of the Deity gives me reason to believe, that he will not suffer in vain. "God is good; and His tender mercies are over all His works." In His adorable attributes, then, I rest my hopes, firmly persuaded, that, however incomprehensible to me may be the means, He, who at first gave me life,

is able to restore it, when death shall have dissolved my connection with the present world.

These, then, are the grounds of my expectation of another state of being, when we shall be delivered from the imperfections and evils inseparable from mortality, and fitted for a more intimate communion with our Maker; when it will be our occupation and delight to contemplate with improving faculties His stupendous works, and to adore with reverence His transcendent perfections; when we shall be re-united to those, whom we loved on earth, and join with them, and every human being, of every nation and every language, whatever sufferings here or hereafter some, for their correction, may previously undergo, in the sublime offices of devotion to our Creator and Benefactor, through the never ending revolutions of eternity. Blessed state, whence every malignant passion is excluded, and where peace, harmony, and felicity for ever dwell! Happy is the man, who can oppose to the pains and sorrows of his present condition the animating hope of a glorious immortality, when this clouded scene shall

have for ever closed. But, O happy, happy, thrice happy, is the Christian, who feels the full assurance, that death is only the gate to everlasting life, and to a state of enjoyment, "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive."

NOTE A.

Referred to, in Vol. I. p. 339.

THE SYSTEM OF SPINOZA

EXAMINED.

His first definition is, *Per causam sui intelligo id, cujus essentia involvit existentiam; seu id, cujus natura non potest concipi, nisi existens.* Here, I apprehend, is a palpable inaccuracy; and if such, the less excusable, as the author professes to discuss the subject with all the precision of metaphysical correctness, and scientific demonstration. A thing is here supposed to be the cause of itself. Can it act before it exists? Must not every cause precede its effect? Or can any thing bring itself into existence? *Causa sui* involves the absurdity, that a thing is at once both cause and effect. If he had intended to define a self-existent being, he might easily have avoided this contradiction. Of his second definition of *causa sui* the accuracy may be justly questioned. We cannot conceive a thing to exist, and yet not to exist *at the same time;* for this would be a contradiction. Whatever exists, may be conceived, or imagined not to exist—and a being, regarded not simply as existing, but existing necessarily, is not an object of conception; as a self-existent or necessary existent, it is apprehended by the intellect.

His second definition is, *Ea res dicitur in suo genere finita, quæ aliâ ejusdem naturæ terminari potest. Ex. gr. Corpus dicitur finitum, quia aliud semper majus concipimus. Sic cogitatio aliâ cogitatione terminatur. At corpus non terminatur cogitatione, nec cogitatio corpore.* To this definition we object. It is founded in assumptions, which, if not false, are at least questionable. A substance is properly considered to be finite, as having limited existence in time or place. The earth is a finite body, not because it is bounded by another planet, or another body, but because it occupies only a limited portion of infinite space. Again; we are not justified in affirming, whatever may to some appear to be the probability, that a thought may not terminate in the absence of thought, and not in another thought. The definition would be correct only on the certainty of a *plenum*, which Spinoza, though he maintains it, is not warranted to assume; and on the certainty also, that the mind never ceases to think, a position, which is disputed by many eminent metaphysicians.

His third definition is of substance. *Per substantiam intelligo id, quod in se est, et per se concipitur; hoc est id, cujus conceptus non indigeat conceptu alterius rei, a quo formari debeat.* An attribute he defines thus,—*Id, quod intellectus de substantia percipit, tanquam ejusdem essentiam involvens.* A mode, which he considers to be different from an attribute, he defines ambiguously; but in his Fourth Letter to Oldenburg, he expresses himself more precisely thus, *Per modificationem sive per accidens, intelligo id, quod in alio est, et per id, in quo est, concipitur.* Thus a substance exists in itself, and is conceived *per se;* a mode exists in a substance, and is conceived by, or through that, in which it

exists; and an attribute is, what the intellect perceives of a substance, as constituting its essence. In thus defining a substance, and a mode, we apprehend he is chargeable with an egregious error. We shall dismiss the question of a *substratum*, and merely ask, what conception can be formed of matter, but as it affects our tactual and visual feelings? What idea can we have of any substance divested of its modes? Conception of any sensible object is but sensation at second hand; a material substance, therefore, stripped of those qualities by which it affects our senses, is in itself utterly inconceivable. In opposition to these definitions, we should maintain, that we conceive the substance from its properties or modes, and not the modes from the substance.

An attribute he defines to be that, which the intellect perceives of substance, as constituting its essence. The term *essence*, absolutely understood, may denote that, which constitutes the nature of a substance, or makes it to be, what it is, without reference to any other being; or relatively taken, it is that, by which a substance is, what it appears to any sentient being to be. Hence he considers objective essence to be identical with certainty. "Idem est certitudo, et essentia objectiva."* Dismissing the inaccuracy here manifest in confounding a thing external with a perception existing in the mind, we proceed to remark, that his definition of attribute implies a notion purely relative, namely, what the essence of a substance is, as perceived by the understanding.

If the word *essence* then, in his definition, mean something purely relative, what does the human intellect discover of substance, in relation to us, as constituting its essence, and as distinguished from its modes? It must

* Op. Posth. p. 367.

be either extension, or thought, without one or other of which properties no substance (a *substratum* being supposed) can be conceived as existing. Now, let it be granted, that corporeal substance, to which we shall confine our attention, can be conceived, without any of its accidents, qualities, or properties, that is, without any of its modes, as colour, taste, smell, heat, or cold, will the author contend, that it can be conceived also without extension? If he should answer in the affirmative, let him tell us, what substance is, or how it is to be conceived, divested of every attribute by which the understanding perceives it, and every quality, by which it affects our senses. If then substance cannot be conceived, without either attribute or mode, what becomes of his definition, which describes substance as conceivable by itself? In his Second Letter to H. Oldenburg, he says, that extension is conceived by itself. He must, therefore, either maintain, that substance and extension are one and the same thing, each being conceivable by itself, and each therefore existing by itself; or he must admit, that they are different. If he adopt the former alternative, it will follow, that the substance and the attribute being one and the same thing, his distinction has no foundation in truth. The attribute constitutes the substance, or the substance is identical with the attribute. Hence *substance* and *attribute* being interconvertible terms, we may say, with equal propriety, "extension has *extension*," as "substance has *extension*." If he choose the latter alternative, it follows, that substance, not being conceivable without extension, is not conceivable *per se*. His definition, therefore, is false, and every deduction from it untrue.

He defines Deity in these words:—*Per Deum intelligo ens absolute infinitum, hoc est, substantiam*

constantem infinitis attributis, quorum unumquodque æternam et infinitam essentiam exprimit. In this definition, there is no conception expressed, or implied, which can be pronounced irreverential, or which a rational and pious Theist would be disposed to condemn. But, when we discover, who his Deity is, we recoil from the thought with feelings of abhorrence.

His definitions are followed by a few axioms; and in examining these, the intelligent reader will perceive, that, whether the term *axiom* be employed by the author to denote a self-evident truth, or, in its original import, merely to signify a theoretical, as a *postulate* denotes a practical, assumption, several of them cannot be rationally conceded. Like most other Infidels and Sceptics, he assumes premises adapted to his conclusions, knowing that, if the former be granted, the latter will necessarily follow.

His first axiom, *Omnia, quæ sunt, vel in se, vel in alio sunt*, will be admitted as true, qualities being acknowledged to inhere in a *substratum.* His second, *Id, quod per aliud non potest concipi, per se concipi debet;* and his third, *Ex data causa determinata necessario sequitur effectus; et contra, si nulla datur determinata causa, impossibile est, ut effectus sequatur*, will also be conceded. His fourth axiom, on which much of his subsequent reasoning depends, he states thus, *Effectûs cognitio a cognitione causæ dependet, et eandem involvit.* If it be intended to signify, as from the plain construction of the words, we should infer, that we derive our knowledge of the effect from our knowledge of the cause, the axiom is false. It is in this sense, that the author has employed it in his demonstration of his sixth proposition. Now, though we are frequently enabled to deduce the effect from the cause, and conversely, it

would be easy to multiply examples to shew, that the effect may be perfectly known, where the cause can be only conjectured, or is wholly unknown. If we saw a house in ruins, it might be impossible to ascertain, whether it had been thrown down by the fury of the elements, or by the hand of man, or had been gradually demolished by the slower, but not less certain ravages of time. It is evident; then, that our knowledge of the effect does not depend on our knowledge of the cause. The author himself, indeed, with remarkable inconsistency, in his "De Intellectûs Emendatione Tractatus", acknowledges, that our knowledge of the cause is improved, if not acquired, by our acquaintance with the effect. He says, *Nam revera cognitio effectûs nihil aliud est, quàm perfectiorem causæ cognitionem acquirere.* And, in a note, he adds, *Nota, quod hinc appareat nihil nos de Natura posse intelligere, quin simul cognitionem primæ causæ, sive Dei, ampliorem reddamus.* It cannot, indeed, be questioned, that our knowledge of the cause is often acquired from our knowledge of the effect. We infer, with no less certainty, the intellectual character of Spinoza, from the nature of his productions, than we should conclude the fatal effect of the knife, with which the Jew attacked him, if it had pierced his heart. We are aware, it may be urged, that our inferences, in such cases, are founded in experience. It is granted, we know nothing *a priori* of causes and effects; and when Spinoza delivers his axiom, that our knowledge of the effect depends on our knowledge of the cause, does he not appeal to the testimony of experience? How can he know either the cause from the effect, or the converse, unless by observing, that certain antecedents, and certain consequents are uniformly conjoined? If the axiom

then is, as it seems to be, intended to assume, that our knowledge of the effect depends on our acquaintance with the cause, the axiom asserts, what will not be conceded as true, much less as self-evident.

We should hardly suppose, that the author intended by the axiom to signify, that the knowledge possessed by the effect depends on that possessed by the cause; for in this sense, we apprehend, that *intellectus*, and not *cognitio*, would have been the term employed. In this construction of the words, while we admit, that no more knowledge can be communicated by the cause, than it possesses, we deny, that it can be assumed as a maxim, that the intellect existing in, or displayed by the effect, is a just criterion of that of the cause. For, though the former cannot be less, it may be greater. Yet in this sense, connecting it with the following axiom, which we shall proceed to examine, he seems to have applied it to the demonstration of his third proposition. This axiom, therefore, in its plain and obvious construction, is false; and in the other, not properly its acceptation, is not universally true. For the dependence can only amount to this, that the effect cannot possess more intellect than the cause, while it may possess much less.

His fifth axiom, is thus expressed. *Quæ nihil commune cum se invicem habent, etiam per se invicem intelligi non possunt; sive conceptus unius alterius conceptum non involvit.* On the basis of this axiom much of his subsequent reasoning is founded. In fact, it assumes several positions as true, which he afterwards endeavours to prove. It evidently excludes the possibility of an immaterial being, and assumes, that, in matters of fact, man's experience is the measure of possible exist-

ence. But, unless it can be shewn, that it would imply a contradiction to suppose, that an immaterial being may comprehend the nature of a material being, or produce facts to prove, that an immaterial substance cannot understand the nature of a material substance, we reject his axiom as a mere gratuitous assertion. Even if experience were unquestionably favourable to his position, we should refuse our assent to it as a universal truth, on this impregnable ground, that no limited experience can prove a proposition to be universally true. But is it incontrovertibly certain, that experience favours his position? Is it ascertained beyond all controversy, that man is purely a material being? He must have devoted but little attention to the question, who will not acknowledge, that the hypothesis involves insuperable difficulties. Until it were established, as an incontestable fact, that man is composed of only one substance, and *that* material, the testimony of experience would not avail the author. If the thinking principle in man is immaterial, that is, having no common property with matter, its capacity to comprehend the affections of matter, furnishes an actual disproof of the author's axiom. If the nature of the thinking principle is doubtful, the axiom is doubtful, and every proposition involving it must also be doubtful. *If* the thinking principle be immaterial, the axiom is false. One thing seems certain, that the author is not justified, in assuming it as true, until he has proved these two positions, 1st, That man is purely a material being; and 2d, That human experience is the standard of possibility.

His seventh axiom is, *Quicquid, ut non existens potest concipi, ejus essentiam non involvit existentiam.* Imagination may create or annihilate,—with this limita-

tion, that it cannot create contradictory, or mutually repugnant images. What we conceive to exist, we may conceive as not existing; but what the intellect apprehends as necessarily existing cannot be apprehended as not existing—and what the intellect does not apprehend as self-existing, cannot have a necessary or independent existence. The axiom thus understood will be granted.

We proceed to examine his leading propositions. The first is, *Substantia prior est naturâ suis affectibus.* This proposition, he observes, is evident, from his third and fifth definitions, the former of a substance, and the latter of its modes or affections. In opposition to these definitions, we deny, that it is by, or through, the substance, that we conceive the modes, as we affirm, that without *them* we can form no conception of the substance. The question here is, not what we *perceive* of the nature of the substance by the aid of intellect, but what we *conceive* of it; and we repeat, that of a substance divested of all those qualities, by which it affects the senses, imagination can form no idea. Whatever *substance* may be in itself, of which, we acknowledge, that we have no conception, one thing seems certain, that every substance, and its modes or qualities are contemporaneous existents.

His second proposition is, *Ducæ substantiæ, diversa attributa habentes, nihil inter se commune habent.* The metaphysical reader will be at no loss to discover the scope of the author in urging this proposition. It is evidently intended to prepare him for the leading dogma of the Sceptic, namely, that there can be only one substance, and that material. Of the proposition in question he offers no other proof than his definition of a substance, as existing in itself, and conceivable by itself. For he adds, as the

only argument, *Unaquæque enim in se debet esse, et per se debet concipi.* In answer, we in the first place deny, and we have assigned a reason for the negation, that a substance is conceivable by itself, or that it can exist, independently on its qualities and properties. And in the second place, we ask, admitting his definition to be correct, by what argument can he prove, or by what necessary connection does it follow as a corollary, that two substances having different attributes existing by themselves, and conceivable *per se*, have therefore nothing in common. This is not a necessary consequence, and the author's attempt at proof amounts to nothing more, than gratuitous assertion. When attentively examined, the proposition will be found to rest on the assumption, that nothing but matter does, or can, exist. We know nothing of substance directly but by sense and consciousness. Whatever information intellect communicates, it is by inference. Now, by the term *attribute*, he means, what we perceive of substance by intellect. Is any proof here offered, or is it possible to prove, that a diversity of attributes, as perceived by the understanding, necessarily implies the absence of all common modes? If by *attribute* he means the essence of a substance, the answer is, that we know nothing of the absolute essence of any substance: we know merely, what it is in relation to us. And we are too little acquainted with the nature of substance, to be able to say, whether two substances having different attributes can, or cannot, have some common properties. Had he said *contrary* and not *different* attributes, meaning that their natures were directly opposite, his proposition would have been a mere truism, neither requiring nor admitting proof. If for example, matter be extended, figured and moveable, while mind is unextended, un-

figured, and immoveable, we require not to be told, that they have no common property. Their attributes are directly contrary, what is positive in those of the one, being negative in those of the other.

His third proposition, which holds a most important rank in the author's system, is the following, *Quæ res nihil commune inter se habent, earum una alterius causa esse non potest.* By this proposition he would exclude the agency of an immaterial being on a material substance, as impossible. We have already adverted to this proposition, as offered by the author of "Academical Questions." Let us now examine Spinoza's demonstration. He says, *Si nihil commune inter se habent, ergo* (per Ax. 5.) *nec per se invicem possunt intelligi; adeoque* (per Ax. 4.) *una alterius causa esse non potest.* Now it has been shewn, that his fifth axiom is a mere gratuitous assumption. It presumes, that nothing is possible, but what consists with our experience. It presumes farther, that an immaterial principle cannot act on a material substance, assuming, as an incontrovertible and established fact, in opposition to argument, and high concurrent authorities, that man is purely a material being. Now, let him remove the objections, not to say contradictions, to which the hypothesis of Materialism is liable, and prove to our satisfaction, that man is purely a corporeal substance, and his axiom will then be acknowledged to have experience in its favour, or at least, not to be contradicted by experience. And when he has accomplished this, we apprehend, no easy task, let him next convince us, that we ought to believe our experience to be the standard of all possibility. It will be incumbent on him also to prove, that the absence of testimony is one and the same thing, with contrariety to testimony.

His fourth axiom, on which also his demonstration rests, has been shewn to be false; we contend, therefore, that his proposition is false, or to say the least, has not been proved. Unless both axioms are true, the proposition cannot be true.

In his Fourth Letter to Oldenburg, he seems to abandon this attempt at demonstration, and erects his proof on the argument, which has been already examined. He asserts, that one thing cannot be produced by another, unless they have some common property, assigning this reason, *Cum nihil sit in effectu commune cum causa, totum quod haberet, haberet a nihilo.* This argument must be rejected as gratuitous and false, until it can be proved, that the communicating author, or cause, is a non-entity. Then indeed, but not otherwise, it would be true, that, *quod haberet, haberet a nihilo.* But till then, we must contend, that there is no contradiction in believing, that an Immaterial Being, possessing infinite wisdom and power, can give existence to a material substance.

His fourth proposition, he thus states, *Duæ aut plures res distinctæ vel inter se distinguuntur ex diversitate attributorum substantiarum, vel ex diversitate earundem affectionum.* This proposition evidently implies, that there may, or may not, be a diversity of attributes without a diversity of modes, and is therefore in manifest contradiction to a preceding proposition, in which he affirms, that, where there is a diversity of attributes in two substances, there can be nothing in common. For, if there could be no common mode or affection in two substances, having different attributes, that is, if diversity of mode necessarily followed diversity of attribute, it would surely be ridiculous to say, that substances are distinguished

either by a difference of attributes, or a difference of modes, the former necessarily implying the latter. In his fifth proposition, he affirms, that there cannot be two substances of the same nature, or having the same attribute. *In rerum natura non possint dari duæ aut plures substantiæ ejusdem naturæ, sive attributi.* This has been termed his *argumentum Achilleum.* He reasons thus. *Si darentur plures distinctæ, deberent inter se distingui, vel ex diversitate attributorum, vel ex diversitate affectionum. Si tantum ex diversitate attributorum, conceditur ergo, non dari nisi unam ejusdem attributi.* We stop to repeat, that if diversity of attributes inclûdes, as he affirms, any identity of modes, it is quite idle to talk of substances being distinguishable either by a diversity of attributes, or a diversity of modes. We observe also, that in the latter alternative, his conclusion will not be conceded. Modal distinction is not to be confounded with numerical difference; nor is modal identity one and the same thing with substantial identity. Substances may even be distinguished by neither a diversity of modes, nor a diversity of attributes, but by a difference of the accidents of time and place. We see no reason, therefore, for believing, that there may not exist two or more substances, numerically indeed different, but of identical attributes. In the next place, we would enquire, by what law of reasoning we are expected to grant the thing to be proved, namely, that there can be only one substance of the same nature, or the same attribute. He proceeds to the other alternative.

At si ex diversitate affectionum, cum substantia sit prior naturâ suis affectionibus, depositis ergo affectionibus, et in se considerata, non poterit concipi ab alia distingui; hoc est, non poterant dari plures, sed tantum una. The first observation, which here naturally

presents itself, is, that this part of his demonstration proceeds on the presumed truth of his third and fifth definitions, in which he asserts, that a substance exists in itself, and antecedently to its modes. This fallacy we have endeavoured to expose. We can have no conception of any existent, but from its modes or properties. Substance destitute of qualities, is utterly inconceivable; and its attributes, or what the understanding refers to it, are evidently deducible from these qualities. The qualities or modes may be changed, while the substance remains, subsisting by itself, independently on any other created being, or, as the Atheist would affirm, subsisting by the necessity of its own nature, but still it must have qualities. To suppose a substance, without modes, seems as absurd, as to suppose modes without a substance.

But were we to concede all, that the author asks, and grant that a substance is prior to its modes, and that, in the examination of two substances, we separate the affections, and dismiss them from consideration, how can it follow, that, because they have one and the same essence, and taken separately, cannot be distinguished from each other, they are therefore only one substance? A Materialist must grant, that there cannot exist two substances, of the same attributes, the same qualities, *and the same accidents*, because two material substances cannot exist at the same time, and in the same place: but this is not the proposition of Spinoza.

His sixth proposition is, *Una substantia non potest produci ab alia substantia.* The consequences here involved the intelligent reader will intuitively perceive. Of this proposition he offers two demonstrations. *In rerum natura non possunt dari duæ substantiæ ejusdem attributi*, (per Prop. præced.) *hoc est*, (per Prop. 2.) *quæ*

aliquid inter se commune habent; adeoque (per Prop. 3.) *una alterius causa esse nequit, sive una ab alia produci non potest.* This demonstration presumes the truth of two preceding propositions, which he has failed to prove, 1st, That there cannot be two substances of the same nature, or having the same attribute; and 2dly, That unless they are of the same nature, one cannot produce the other. His second demonstration, he states thus, *Nam, si substantia ab alia posset produci, ejus cognitio a cognitione suæ causæ deberet pendere* (per Ax. 4.), *adeoque* (per Def. 3.) *non esset substantia.* The axiom, on which the demonstration rests, has been shewn to be false. We may have a distinct conception of a substance, without knowing its cause. A substance, he defines to be that, which exists in itself, and is conceived by itself. If we take the former part of the definition, as understood to imply, that a substance exists, independently on any foreign cause, it is a work of supererogation to prove, that a substance cannot be produced; for the production of a self-existent, or independent substance, would be an absurdity. This then can hardly be understood to be his meaning. But, if by *existing in itself,* he means, as is presumable, to contradistinguish it from mode, which exists not in itself, by what process of reasoning does he prove, either that the substance produced, does not exist in itself, independently on its modes, according to his own definition of substance and mode; or that it could not be a substance, if we were acquainted with its cause? If we take the latter part of the definition of substance, as being conceived by itself, the substance produced will be no less a substance as being conceived without its modes, (this possibility being assumed by him,) whether we do, or do not, know its cause. In

short, if, by his definition of substance, he means, that it exists in itself independent and uncaused, it is a waste of time to prove, that it cannot be produced. If he means, that it exists independently on its modes, and is prior to these, we, in the 1st place, deny, that a substance can exist either prior to its modes, or independently on its modes; and 2dly, If this were possible, we ask; according to his own doctrine, why may not one substance be produced by another, each being conceivable without its modes?

His seventh proposition, that existence is essential to the nature of substance would follow, as a corollary to the preceding proposition, and with it must stand, or fall.

His eighth proposition is, *Omnis substantia est necessario infinita.* The reader will recollect, that in his sixth proposition he asserted it to be impossible for one substance to be produced by another. If both these dogmas be true, then one or other of these two consequences necessarily follows. Either there exists a plurality of eternal, independent, and infinite substances, or there is only one. The former alternative will be rejected. If then there can exist but one substance, and that infinite, is it not absurd to say, that every substance, as if more than one could exist, must be infinite? We may also here remark, that in his assertion of only one substance, he involves himself in contradiction. He defines a substance to be that, which exists in itself, and is conceived by itself: and an attribute to be that, which the intellect perceives of any substance. In his Twenty-Seventh Letter, he says, that he understands by *substance* and *attribute* one and the same thing, except that the latter term has a reference to the intellect, ascribing to a substance a certain nature. Now, if *attribute* be,

in respect to us, equivalent to the nature or essence of a substance, and if distinct essences constitute, as to us, distinct substances, it seems to follow necessarily, that distinct attributes constitute distinct substances. He must, therefore, either deny, that there can be distinct attributes, or he must allow, that there may be more than one substance. He seems to have perceived this dilemma, and in a scholium to his tenth proposition, he affirms, that difference of attribute does not constitute difference of substance. And why? Because it is the nature of a substance, that every one of its attributes be conceived *per se*. But how does this remove the contradiction? If there is only one substance, difference of attribute, or of essence, does not constitute difference of substance, which is in direct contradiction to his fourth proposition, or if it does constitute a difference, there must be more than one substance. From this dilemma there seems to be no escape. One remark more, which might indeed have been previously offered. If there is only one substance, and that infinite, and if that substance, as he himself defines it, is conceivable *per se*, we naturally ask, by whom is it to be conceived, if there be no other substance? Will he maintain the absurdity, that it can be conceived by an accident or a mode?—that it can be an object of conception, with no being to conceive it? This surely involves a palpable absurdity.

We return to his proposition, which he attempts thus to prove. *Substantia unius attributi non, nisi unica, existit,* (per Prop. 5.) *et ad ipsius naturam pertinet existere* (per Prop. 7.). *Erit ergo de ipsius natura, vel finita, vel infinita existere. At non finita; nam* (per Def. 2.) *deberet terminari ab alia ejusdem naturæ, quæ etiam necessario deberet existere* (per Prop. 7.),

adeoque darentur duæ substantiæ ejusdem attributi; quod est absurdum (per Prop. 5.). *Existit ergo infinita.* A reference to our observations on his second definition, and on his fifth and seventh propositions, will furnish, we trust, a sufficient refutation of this argument.

On reviewing the preceding demonstrations of Spinoza, the attentive reader will perceive that he has so framed the definitions and axioms, by which they are introduced, that the most important of his propositions follow as necessary consequences. It would seem, that he set out with the conviction, that nothing but matter exists, and that he accommodated his assumptions to his intended conclusions.

His demonstration of the necessary existence of Deity, is thus stated. His proposition is, *Deus, sive substantia constans infinitis attributis, quorum unumquodque æternam et infinitam essentiam exprimit, necessario existit.* His first proof proceeds as follows. *Si negas, concipe, si fieri potest, Deum non existere. Ergo,* (per Ax. 7.) *ejus essentia non involvit existentiam. Atqui* (per Prop. 7.) *hoc est absurdum; ergo Deus necessario existit.* If the reader will take the trouble to revert to his definition of the Divinity, or attends to the general delineation of the Divine character in the proposition itself, he cannot fail to perceive, that Spinoza begs the question: for a Being of infinite attributes must be self-existent, or necessarily existent. It may be observed also, that in his attempt to prove, in his seventh proposition, that existence, essentially, or necessarily, belongs to a substance, he has completely failed, inasmuch as his argument rests on the presumed truth of a dogma, which he has not proved, namely, that one substance cannot be produced by another, this also resting on the

truth of two other propositions, which he has unsuccessfully endeavoured to demonstrate. Thus, in stating his proposition, he begs the question: and in conducting the argument, he proceeds on premises, which we reject as false.

His second demonstration is equally fallacious. *Cujuscunque rei assignari debet causa, seu ratio, tam cur existit, quam cur non existit. Ex. gr. si triangulus existit, ratio, seu causa, dari debet, cur existit; si autem non existit, ratio etiam, seu causa, dari debet, quæ impedit, quo minus existat, sive, quæ ejus existentiam tollat. Hæc vero ratio, seu causa, vel in natura rei contineri debet, vel extra ipsam. Ex. gr. rationem, cur circulus quadratus non existat, ipsa ejus natura indicat; nimirum, quia contradictionem involvit. Cur autem contrà substantia existat, ea sola etiam ejus natura sequitur, quæ scilicet existentiam involvit* (per Prop. 7.). *At ratio, cur circulus vel triangulum existit, vel cur non existit, ex eorum natura non sequitur, sed ex ordine universæ naturæ corporeæ; ex eo enim sequi debet, vel jam triangulum necessario existere, vel impossibile esse, ut jam existat. Atque hæc per se manifesta sunt. Ex quibus sequitur, id necessario existere, cujus nulla ratio, nec causa, datur, quæ impedit, quo minus existat. Si itaque nulla ratio, nec causa, dari potest, quæ impedit, quo minus Deus existat, vel quæ ejus existentiam tollat, omnino concludendum est, eundem necessario existere. At si talis ratio, seu causa, daretur, ea, vel in ipsa Dei natura, vel extra ipsam dari deberet, hoc est, in alia subtantia alterius naturæ. Nam, si ejusdem naturæ esset, eo ipso concederetur dari Deum. At substantia, quæ alterius esset naturæ, nihil cum Deo commune habere, adeoque neque ejus existentiam ponere, neque*

tollere posset. Cum igitur ratio, seu causa, quæ divinam existentiam tollat, extra divinam naturam dari non possit, debebit necessario dari, siquidem non existit, in ipsa ejus natura, quæ propterea contradictionem involveret. Atque hoc de Ente absolute infinito, et summe perfecto affirmare, absurdum est; ergo, nec in Deo, nec extra Deum ulla causa, seu ratio, datur, quæ ejus existentiam tollat, ac proinde Deus necessario existit. Let us examine this reasoning. From the mode, in which this argument is conducted, and the general tenor of the reasoning, we should naturally infer, that the author aimed at proving two propositions, 1st, The existence of Deity; and, 2dly, That he exists necessarily. For, if the former of these two facts had not been included in the scope of his argument, we can perceive no pertinency in arguing, that whatever is not prevented from existing, either by something in its own nature, or by something external, must exist.

The argument proceeds thus. There must be a cause, or reason, why anything exists, or does not exist: and that exists necessarily, the existence of which there is no obstruction to prevent, and no cause to destroy. If then no cause can be assigned, either to hinder, or to take away the existence of Deity, we must conclude, that he exists, there being nothing to preclude his existence, and that his existence is necessary. And, in order to prove, that no such cause can exist, he argues thus. If it could exist, it must be either *in* the nature of Deity, or *without* his nature, in other words, it must be either internal, or external. It cannot be, he says, in the nature of Deity, for this would be a contradiction, Deity being a substance, and existence being, according to the doctrine of the author, essential to a substance. The argument

is a fallacy; for this horn of the dilemma remains entire. He has failed to prove, that a substance exists by its own essential nature, and this defect alone vitiates the argument. But, if his reasoning were conclusive, by assuming Deity to be a substance, he begs the question. Whether, therefore, we take his definition of a substance to be correct, or admit, that he has demonstrated its necessary and essential existence, his argument involves a *petitio principii*. Let us examine the other horn of the dilemma. If the cause be external, it must either be of the same nature with Deity, and then it would be Deity himself, or of a different nature, and then having no common property with Him, it could neither give, nor take away, His existence.

Here again he presumes the truth of two positions, which he has not proved, and which we reject as inadmissible. 1st, That two substances, of the same nature, are only one substance; and 2d, That a substance, having nothing in common with another substance, cannot act upon it. The former proposition, we repudiate as absurd, and the latter, we pronounce to be a mere gratuitous assertion. On these grounds we reject the argument as fallacious. With one observation more, we shall dismiss it. If there be no cause to prevent, or to take away, the existence of any thing, that thing must exist. This is his position. Here then are two objects of consideration. 1st, The prevention; and, 2d, The destruction of existence. Now, after a thing exists, if there be nothing external, or internal, by which it can be annihilated, it is evident, that the thing must continue to exist, for it cannot perish without a cause. But the principal enquiry is, how it comes to exist. Now, it is said, that it must exist, if there be nothing to prevent

it. When we speak of preventing, or hindering, the existence of any thing, it is implied, that there exists somewhere a tendency to its production; for it would be absurd to speak of preventing *that*, to the production of which there is nowhere any disposition, or tendency. If that tendency exists, it must be either internal or external. The former alternative is an impossibility; a nonentity can have no tendency. If the tendency be in something external, then that external thing is antecedent to the possible production, the latter, therefore, cannot be a substance infinite and perfect. Nothing can be more evident, than that the thing must either have been eternal, or must have had an origin. If it was eternal, it is absurd to speak of its existence being prevented, or to account for its existence. If it had an origin, it must have been produced by something prior to itself; for to speak of a thing, coming into existence, as the first of all beings, because there was nothing to prevent it, is the most egregious nonsense. It would not be difficult to point out other errors, which the argument involves, and several consequences inadmissible, even by Spinoza himself, to which his reasoning would lead; but we shall proceed to examine his third demonstration, which he states thus. "*Posse non existere impotentia est. Si itaque id, quod jam necessario existit, non nisi entia infinita sunt, sunt ergo entia finita potentiora Ente absolute infinito; atqui hoc absurdum est: ergo vel nihil existit, vel Ens absolute infinitum necessario etiam existit.*

The ability of a thing to exist implies strictly ability to continue in existence; for *the ability of a thing to call itself into existence* involves a contradiction. Now, ability to exist being admitted as an evidence of power, it would follow, according to the author, that, if none but

finite beings existed, they would have more power, than a Being infinitely perfect, inasmuch as they *would*, and a necessarily existent Being *would not*, exist. This is an absurdity. The argument is evidently intended to prove, that an infinite Being necessarily exists; it is therefore wholly superfluous. A Being absolutely infinite must be necessarily existent. To prove, that an infinite Being has a necessary existence, is to prove the identical proposition, that infinity has neither beginning nor end. Thus, as an argument for existence, his reasoning is fallacious, and, for self-existence, it is idle and superfluous.

According, then, to the doctrine of Spinoza, a Deity necessarily exists—a being, as he afterwards attempts to prove, extended and intelligent, infinite and indivisible. Now, as one substance, agreeably to his system, is incapable of producing another, and as only one infinite substance can exist, it follows, that the Deity is the only existing substance, and that the universe is nothing; or that the Deity and the universe are one and the same being. The latter is the doctrine of Spinoza. It follows, that all corporeal forms are parts of this substance, *as it is extended*, and all minds parts of the same substance, *as it is intelligent*. *Deus est res cogitans* (Eth. p. 2. Prop. 1.) *Deus est res extensa* (Prop. 2.). This one being produces in itself by an immanent action all, that are called creatures, and which are commonly, as he observes, supposed to be distinct from Deity. Hence the numberless bodies and minds of which it is composed, with their infinite modifications of good and evil, physical and moral, are diversities in his condition; and he becomes at once the agent and the patient. But, in compassion to the feelings of the pious and devout reader, we forbear from pursuing this wretched system through all its hideous

and revolting consequences; nor shall we stop to expose the vain and contemptible artifices of the author, by which he would reconcile his system with the tenets of the Christian faith. The *anima mundi* of the ancients, as implying a moving or vivifying principle, distinct from the universe itself, is comparatively a rational hypothesis; but to identify Deity with the universe, is a doctrine so monstrous, so abhorrent to every pious feeling, and so repugnant to all our apprehensions of the wisdom, the power, and the goodness of the Great Cause of all, whose existence he himself acknowledges, that we cannot but express our astonishment, that any person should be found, by whom such a wretched doctrine can be deliberately embraced, or contemplated without horror. With this observation, we consign it to that indignation, which impious sophistry cannot but excite in every devout and rational mind.

NOTE B.

THE subject of Conscience has given occasion to much discussion, and considerable controversy, among Ethical and Metaphysical writers. By some this faculty has been termed the moral sense, and has been represented as a perceptive power, the arbitress of right and wrong, in human conduct. They believe, that, as reason distinguishes truth from error, so conscience discriminates between virtue and vice. This doctrine, it must be owned, appears difficult to be reconciled with that discordance of

opinion, which has prevailed, and still continues to obtain, in different nations, in respect to the morality of human actions. If the moral sense were capable of discriminating between virtue and vice in every instance, as the eye distinguishes white from black, or the palate sweet from sour, it would be impossible to account for this diversity of moral perception. Were this doctrine true, all men, in questions of moral obligation, would think nearly alike. Now, we find on the contrary, that few, if any, moral offences can be named, which, in one nation, or another, have not been deemed innocent, if not laudable. The Spartans approved dexterous thefts. Was it the moral sense, that recommended this nefarious licence? Or was it not rather, an error of reason, by which, though they condemned theft, generally, as a violation of right, yet were led to believe, that to encourage ingenuity even in stealing was politically expedient? And, if the thief concurred in this opinion, was successful in his attempt, and was approved by his fellow citizens, we may reasonably doubt, whether his conscience condemned him. When Cato unsheathed the sword, by which he was to put a period to his life, did he apprehend, that he was about to commit a crime? In one country polygamy is lawful, and in another is punished as criminal. In one we find the son supporting an aged father to the hour of his death; and in another, we behold him feeling it his duty to suffer him, when worn out with years and infirmity, to die for want. Actions, which in one nation, and at one period, have been justified as innocent, if not applauded, as meritorious, have been at another period, and amongst another people, viewed with feelings of horror and disgust. Our perceptions of moral duty vary with the moral and physical circumstances, in which we

are placed. All men acknowledge a difference between right and wrong; but all are not agreed in assigning the same moral character to one and the same action. They have not in every instance an intuitive perception of virtue and vice. Their moral discrimination is generally resolvable into the authority of reason, the influence of education, professional habits, social intercourse, and religious feeling; and from the diversity, or similarity, which obtains in these principles of judgment, originates the contrariety or identity of moral sentiment, and moral conduct, which we find exhibited in different nations, and in different individuals of the same country.

Now, if conscience were an infallible interpretress of the Divine will, and as such were common to all men, we should perceive, instead of this extraordinary discordancy, an established uniformity of moral sentiment pervading every age, and nation of the world. Our animal senses do not deceive us; and if a moral sense had been imparted to us, distinguishing right from wrong, our perceptions of the difference between virtue and vice would have been as clear, and as generally the same in all men, as the perceptions of external sense.

In order to obviate this objection, it is argued, that all our faculties require culture, and arrive at maturity by slow degrees; that conscience, like every physical and intellectual power in our nature, needs the aid of "instruction, education, exercise, and habit"*; and that the diversity of its dictates furnishes no better argument against its existence as a power, discriminating between right and wrong in moral conduct, than the diversity of opinions in matters of speculation would present against the acknowledgment of a rational faculty.

* Reid's Essays.

It is apprehended, that this reply will not be admitted to be satisfactory. If all men agreed in believing in the existence of a power, universally perceptive of virtue and vice, as they concur in believing, that they possess a faculty discriminating between truth and error, the discordance manifest in the dictates of the former power, would not avail to disprove its existence. But philosophers and moralists of the highest eminence have denied, that man possesses a moral sense intuitively perceptive, in every instance, of moral good and moral evil. They say, that were we possessed of such a sense, we could no more question its existence, than we could deny, that we are gifted with the faculties of seeing, remembering, imagining, or reasoning. Besides, it is to be observed, that the presumed energies of this moral sense accomplish nothing, but what is attainable by reason, guided by experience, and enlightened by religion. In the constitution of our nature therefore, it would seem to form a superfluity. It is common indeed to say, that conscience tells us, to do this, and avoid that; but common language is no just criterion of philosophic truth. It is likewise worthy of remark, that in all moral controversies the appeal is not made to conscience as a perceptive faculty, but to reason, to experience, and the precepts of religion. Were we to hear such a man as Ravilliac justifying his crime, by pleading the clear and irresistible dictates of *his* conscience, should we attempt to convince him of his guilt by appealing to the suggestions of *our own?* Such a reference would be nugatory and absurd. We must address his reason, we must correct his judgment, we must exhibit to his imagination the fatal effects, which would necessarily flow from such a mischievous and delusive principle of action, and energetically appeal to

the general spirit, and the express laws of that religion, whose infallible authority he professed to believe.

It would seem, then, that we possess no moral sense, which universally discriminates, by its own peculiar and intuitive power, between right and wrong in moral action, as external sense distinguishes between sour and sweet, light and shade.

It may be asked then, what is conscience? If there is such a power, what is its office? It would seem to be simply this, to approve our conduct, when we do, what *we believe* to be right, and to censure us, when we commit, whatever *we judge* to be wrong. When reason, or religion, or education, has marked the distinction between virtue and vice, we are conscious of a pleasurable feeling, when we practise the one, and of a painful sentiment, when we are guilty of the other. The office of conscience is not legislative, but judiciary: its voice is either laudative or objurgatory, rather than directive or imperative. At the tribunal of this internal judge every man is compelled to appear, and the sentence there pronounced is considered as an announcement of that award, which Divine justice has reserved for us, at the judgment seat of heaven.

It has been here denied, that man possesses an intuitively percipient sense of moral good and moral evil. But, though we deliver it as our opinion, that reason, or the laws of religion, and not conscience, discriminate between virtue and vice, and that, in all cases, where any doubt or diversity of opinion is involved, the appeal must be made to one or other of these tribunals, it must not be hence inferred, that we mean to affirm, that, independently on the exercise of reason, the precepts of religion, the laws of society, or established usages, all

actions are equally indifferent to us. Man is the subject of passions, long before reason and religion exert their authority; and it is wisely ordained by the Author of his nature, that by his mental constitution certain actions produce pleasing emotions, are gratifying to his feelings and gain his approbation, while others are contemplated with horror and disgust. It is in confounding this susceptibility of different emotions, as naturally excited by different actions, with a percipient and discerning power, that the hypothesis of a moral sense seems to have originated. By a sympathy implanted in our nature, and which it has been vainly attempted to resolve into a principle of association, we are spontaneously prompted to rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Is it a sense of duty, that bids the tear to flow at the sight of human misery? Is it reason,—is it religion—is it a sense of expediency, that instantaneously urges us to defend the helpless orphan from the assassin's blow? Is it a sense of duty, which impels the mother to rush to the preservation of her little infant from the raging surge, or the devouring flame, at the risk of her own life? Or, is it because these exhibitions of sympathy and heroism are conducive to the general good, that they excite our admiration, and are honoured with our approval? Is it because reason dictates, or even because religion commands, them? We may answer in the negative. Reason might even justly condemn an action, by which a more valuable life might be hazarded, in order to save one unquestionably less useful; but the impulse is instantaneous, and, from the sympathetic affection from which it springs, we find it impossible to withhold our admiration. And does this emotion originate in reason,

or in the cold calculations of utility or expediency? Is this the ground of our approbation? It is not. It is because these actions, these instinctive principles harmonize with those feelings of sympathy and benevolence, which are implanted in our nature, which are essential to man as a social being, and which, though occasionally overpowered by fierce and malignant passions, are found to display themselves as the general and leading characteristics of his nature. Have monsters lived gratuitously cruel? It is doubted; but if such beings have existed, they have been justly stigmatised as monsters, and furnish no better argument against our constitutional sympathies, our benevolent emotions, and our spontaneous admiration of the sublimity of virtue, than the earthquake and the tempest will be allowed to present against the general order and harmony of the universe.

It has been already observed, that an obvious analogy subsists between the animal and the intellectual systems. The same observation may be extended to the moral constitution of man. In the animal economy we find, that the Author of nature has communicated to certain parts of the corporeal frame certain vital powers, which act without any volition or effort of ours, and whose agency is essential to life and health; while others are subjected to the government of the will, and their proper employment is learned by experience. In like manner, in the intellectual system, there are certain principles implanted by Deity, which are essential not only to our acquisition of knowledge, but to our personal safety; and which operate instinctively, before reason or experience could teach them, if they could be taught at all, while other principles of thinking and acting, not immediately ne-

cessary and capable of being learned, are left to be attained by our own enquiries.

In our moral constitution we discover a similar, and equally wise, provision. Man is called upon to act, long before experience and judgment can direct his conduct. If he were left without a guide, and if all actions were felt by him to be indiscriminately alike, the injurious consequences, which would necessarily ensue, are too obvious to require specification. He is, therefore, endowed with certain moral feelings, to which some actions are naturally agreeable, and others offensive. In the infant state of man, before the complicated interests of civilized society require the exercise of reason, in discriminating right from wrong, and before the moral code, in all its intricate details, must, in the absence of higher authority, be established on the ground of utility or expediency, these simple feelings serve as a general rule, present on all occasions, for the government of our conduct. They act spontaneously, like the automatic vital powers; and as the animal instincts, and the intellectual principles, implanted by nature, conduce to our own preservation, so our moral feelings, by serving in some degree to prompt us to beneficence, and restrain us from cruelty and wrong, are friendly to others, until reason and experience, enlightened by religion, teach us the ground, as well as the more complicated obligations, of moral duty.

It would seem, then, that Conscience is not a perceptive faculty, to whose judgment we can appeal in every instance for the distinction of moral right, and moral wrong; that its office is merely judiciary, and not legislative, awarding pain or pleasure, as we transgress or

obey the convictions of duty,—that all actions, however, in the absence of education, are not naturally indifferent to us, but that some, antecedently to all rules of moral obligation, excite within us feelings of approbation, while others are viewed with sentiments of abhorrence.

THE END.

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